# CANADIAN NIGHTS

ALBERT HICKMAN

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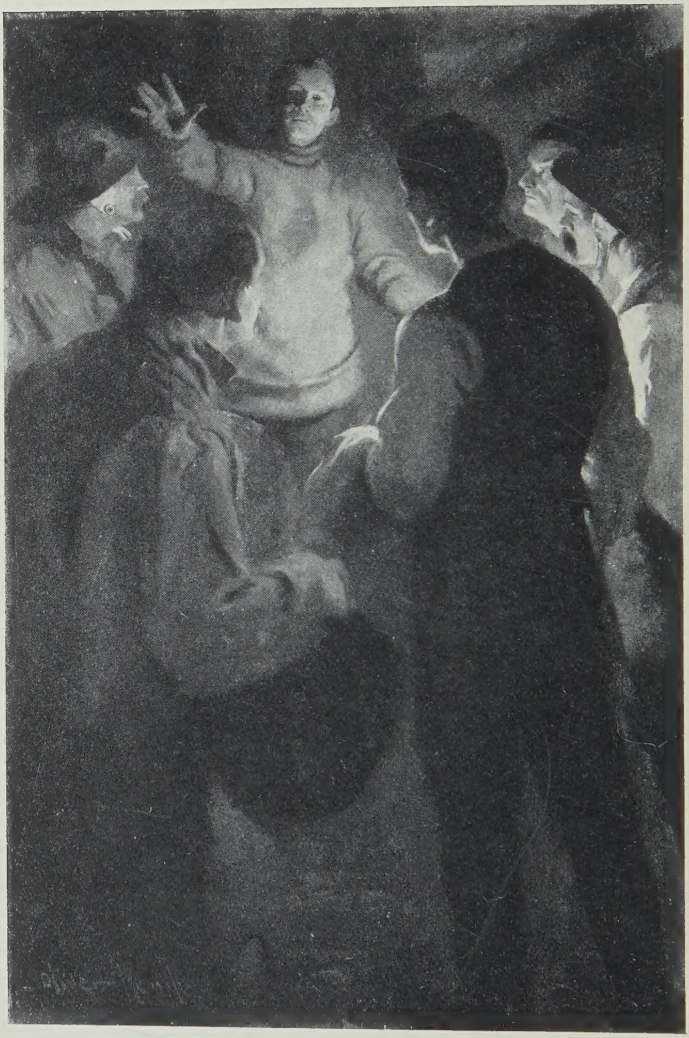

"Gentlemen. . . . This concert is about to begin. What the program is to be I can tell you least of all"

# CANADIAN NIGHTS

BY

ALBERT HICKMAN

Illustrated

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610

# CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| OVERPROOF | 3 |
| THE MAN WITH THE HORSE'S NECK | 28 |
| THE A-FLAT MAJOR POLONAISE | 68 |
| COMPENSATED | 146 |
| THE NEW POWER | 244 |
| ORIENTED | 273 |
| AN UNOFFICIAL LOVE-STORY | 304 |

# ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"Gentlemen. . . . This concert is about to begin. What the program is to be I can tell you least of all" *Frontispiece*

A panel split from top to bottom . . . . . 19

"I've got hol' o' y'r feet, so y're a'right so long as y're good" 61

Suddenly the water all about the wardens blossomed into those wonderful, running, fiery globules . . . . . 133

I heard and saw startling voices and eyes that came from far behind the veil . . . . . 197

They accepted a tow . . . and returned to the wharf . . . 265

Her thunder blended with the roar from below . . . . . 299

"I wanted to be cozy and have you all to myself" . . . 343

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## OVERPROOF

THE gentleman was not thirsty, so the specifications were not exact. He had a void of an indeterminate sort, and he felt that he had to fill it or supper would be a failure. So from the green dining-room of Hotel La Corona, Montreal, he reverted — and the reversion is easy — to the bar of the same institution. There he approached a junior. Now, because he had been four years in the far North in the service of the Honourable, the Hudson's Bay Company — he had come down by Fort Smith, the Athabasca River, Athabasca Landing, and Edmonton, and by rail to Montreal — and because of the lack of practice bred of this experience, the void remained indeterminate and the specifications, as before noted, were not exact.

"I want something about that by that,"— he indicated with his fingers a possible 3¼ by 2⅜ inches — "with no stick in it to speak of, and a great deal of taste, d' ye see?" The junior pondered.

"I know what ye want, or, anyway, I know what I 'd

want if I was wantin' what you want; but I don't think I can do it: but Frank can. Hi! Frank! Now tell him again."

The specifications were repeated. Frank held the sugar-spoon by the end and gazed into space for two — three seconds.

"Ha! Yes, sir!" and the sugar-spoon went on its air-line course to its home. Half a dozen bottles seemed to flash in the light at once, and a moment later a golden-brown liquid was running from a strainer into a dock glass that held some snow and half a straw. The gentleman sipped and marveled aloud:

"Think of translating an inexpressible thought into a taste!"

Frank's lips never moved: the smile swept his eyes alone.

Then by the main front door of the bar entered three men, clad in the Montreal winter-evening glory of evening dress and fur-lined coats. Casually they had a tentative air of discontent, but beneath the surface there developed more. Incidentally, here, it may be said that previously they had visited, in order, Krausmann's, the Windsor, and the Bellevue, and that the bars of the latter two had furnished potations that had emulsified a foundation of Pilsener. *Verbum sap.*

Caution was dethroned, and the spirit of war was in the ascendant. It was the middle of the last act at His Majesty's, and the Corona bar was at its emptiest. The discussion was of an actress of a frequent type, with finger-nails cut to a point, under the delusion that they

made stubby fingers look tapered and thoroughbred, and the other characteristic of the class,— God help us! — and much over-married. It could be gathered that a New York newspaper-man, by name Joe Higginson, and necessarily of Boston, had inconsiderately told the general public the truth about the lady's latest love-affair, and the g. p. had had the bad taste to evince an interest. The story was unsavory and of no real interest to any man or woman. Mr. Higginson had told it in righteousness of spirit and in perfect good faith, for the sake of the moral; but as few read it for the moral, and the immoral was much more patent, his work to a great extent miscarried. But this is aside from the story.

Mr. Higginson's story, being strictly true, was very difficult to deal with. It had caused the lady a great deal of inconvenience and a very considerable loss of money and friends. A reprisal of some sort was essential; but legally this was impossible, and the methods of possible action became narrowed down to a very few. At this present moment it happened that the lady was in Montreal for a week, doing a much advertised piece of vaudeville, and that Mr. Higginson was in Montreal as well. Both were at the Windsor. It appeared, furthermore, that on the evening before, after the show, the lady had given a little supper-party to three of her Montreal admirers, had broken salad for them all with those fingers, had stated her antipathy for Mr. Higginson, and had requested that Mr. Higginson be annihilated, expunged from off the face of the earth, or, at

least, as near it as would be at all consistent with safety.

Each of the trio had visions of times gone past,— many times gone past,— and, it may also be said, entirely distinct times gone past. They remembered evenings that began with supper in New York, and that had no definite ending; and they all felt that they owed the lady much. So they looked upon the lady now,— and she was still nothing less than very beautiful,— and through the yellow orthochromatic screen of Veuve Clicquot, which cleared all mists ahead, they saw the aforesaid annihilation of Mr. Higginson, which they solemnly vowed to perform before the next day should have died.

On the day in question it was furthermore apparent that each of the three had awakened, entirely separately, to face a gray winter morning and the consciousness that Mr. Higginson stood approximately six feet two inches in height, and during his college career had devoted himself to several branches of athletics. This was inconvenient. The three had lunched at the Windsor and considered ways and means, and had received a pregnant glance from a pair of brown eyes, and, in another part of the dining-room, as he came and went, had noticed the shoulders of the aforesaid Higginson. They had dined at the Windsor and had received more pregnant glances, and again noticed the shoulders; and when dinner was over the problem lay still unsolved. When the lady left for the theater, they went east to find a professional boxer who had lived near Sohmer Park.

He was in Westmount, but by telephone said he would meet them in the Corona bar at ten o'clock. Then, as has been said, by Krausmann's and the Windsor and the Bellevue they had arrived at the Corona.

Eight minutes later a heavy-weight also arrived, much too sober to talk to, and had to be given two drinks in quick succession to prepare him. Then the matter was explained.

"Go to the Win'sor to bash a gen'l'man in 'is room for fifty dollars?" he commented. "Naw, I won't!"

"Will ye fer-a-hunder?" queried the spokesman; and he explained thickly and at length how Mr. Higginson had "'sul'd a lady."

"Naw, nor for a hundred. Why don't ye bash 'm yerself? 'T would be cheaper." And the heavy-weight bore the two drinks out into the night.

The three looked at each other with intense solemnity and sighed. The heavy-weight's suggestion came home unpleasantly. The man of the Honourable the Hudson's Bay Company recognized a psychological moment, and, with the poise of a great actor, the intelligence faded from his eye, his brow took on a monumental solemnity, and he spoke with a deliberation that showed the case of one mentally walking a crack.

"Egscuse me, gemlen, but 'd I un'oshten' you te say, man insul' laay?" He stood severely motionless and erect, one of those rare cases that lose control of their speech first.

The junior attendant stared open-eyed at the transformation, and Frank, life-trained to be accustomed to

all things, made no sign. The three regarded the stranger portentously. When he had reached Edmonton he had bought a ready-made suit, and he was still wearing it, while his Montreal tailor of former days was making others. It fitted him as ready-made suits do men of five feet four. His face carried the red tan of the winds that come across the Barren Grounds, and a redder mustache, and his hands were as the hands of a fisherman. He paused to draw a somewhat complicated breath, but waited for no reply.

"'F a man insul' laay I'd break's head. I'd break two men's head fer a hunder doll'r. 'S your man big man?" he queried, apparently after second thought.

"Yesh; awf'ly big," said the youngest of the three with emphasis. There was a short silence.

"Big's I am?" said the man from Fort Simpson, trying to rest his arm easily on the edge of the bar.

The youngest, after a period of surprise at his cigar ashes failing to reach a spittoon a yard away, looked down on the figure in the clothes. "He'd make two 'n' 'alf o' you," he said judicially, with an evident desire to be fair.

"Well, I'll break 's head fer hunder doll'r." The answer was evidently a permanent decision.

The oldest of the three stretched out a hand.

"See here, yo' 're a'right. Will you lick 'm in the Win'sor Hotel?"

The servant of the Great Company indicated all space with a sweep of his arm.

"I 'll lick 'm anywhere — Win'sor Hotel, Win'sor Hall, S'n' James C'thedral, Sohmer Park, Royal Aquarium, Wes'mins' Rabbey — anywhere!" he concluded comprehensively. The trio was visibly impressed, and smiled in unison for the first time since the evening before. The second of the three still retained some doubts, and gazed down steadfastly at the rim of the Hudson's Bay man's hat.

"S' 'ere, ol' man," he ventured, "you sure you c'n lick 'im?"

"P'rf'tl' certain; lick anybody fer hunder doll'r; lick you fer sevent'-five cents, kill you fer doll'r-'n-quar'r." This was said without heat, and the stranger moved suggestively nearer. The trio retired.

"Tha' 's a'right, ol' man," said the oldest, in a conciliatory tone. "Have a drink?"

"No, sir!" This was very decided. "Business before pleasure," he added sententiously. "Gemlen, I 'll join you outside 'n fi' minutes; I 'll have t' get m' ove'-coat." And lifting his feet like a hackney stallion, he walked slowly and with great steadiness into the hotel and through the office.

The last act at His Majesty's was over. The three retired into a corner of the bar away from the incoming crowd and made up a roll of ten ten-dollar notes. Then they invested one dollar in cigars, and went out into the snowy alley to fall on one another's necks. The second still had doubts as to the stranger's ability, but the youngest told of things he 'd seen done by small, red-haired men. The oldest was also reassuring, explain-

ing that it was ginger that counted, and that Julius Cæsar and Alexander the Great were both undersized, red-haired men. The doubter was convinced.

More than five minutes passed, more than ten, and the trio began to get uneasy; besides, it was very cold. But at last the champion appeared, walking rather wide down the front steps of the hotel, but with intense precision, and otherwise normal, as he had been in the bar. He apologized profusely for the delay. He had been hunting for his overcoat. He had formerly had an overcoat, but had at last remembered that he had left it on the train. He had one unfortunate but marked peculiarity: when he fought he had to be warm, very warm, almost ridiculously warm, otherwise he was no good. He would have to ask them for their overcoats, all their overcoats, one to put on, and the others to wrap around his legs and shoulders. It was a short drive to the Windsor, and he knew they would n't mind. When he was cold it took his courage, and in a special case like this one wanted all his courage. Once, when he was cold, he had let an Italian nearly kill him before he got worked up to fight; and, on the other hand, he had killed a man in an overheated bar in Dawson.

He put on one fur-lined overcoat where he stood, and when they had called a sleigh, he got in and they wound the other two fur-lined overcoats around him. But this was not enough. He insisted that they should further wrap him up in the two musk-ox robes that cost the Montreal cabman one hundred dollars apiece. When there was nothing out but a fringe of red hair and his

cap, he was satisfied. He occupied the front seat, down under the driver's box, to shelter him from the wind. The trio crowded into the stripped back seat, and the sleigh started.

As they had foreseen, the stranger insisted on having his hundred dollars beforehand, saying that, of course, the gentlemen could come up and listen outside Mr. Higginson's door to learn that the job was well done. The delivery of the money necessitated a stop on the corner of Guy and Dorchester streets, where he made the cabman drive up on the sidewalk under the arc-light in front of the Crystal Rink while he counted and recounted it, examining each note minutely, intimating in explanation that the gentlemen would quite understand, but that he had met them for the first time that evening and that, after all, perhaps the job was a little peculiar. The youngest of the trio tried to keep his teeth from chattering while he suggested very tentatively that perhaps, if there was any real danger, they had better let the matter drop. But the stranger said no. No, sir; he had taken the matter in hand and had begun to feel a real interest in it. What they might think made no difference from now on. Personally he knew that he could n't sleep until he had licked Mr. Higginson. If the youngest felt afraid, he had better get out; but he, the servant of the Great Company, needed his overcoat for the present, and if he, the youngest, wanted it, he would have to fight for it.

The other two supported him and the youngest explained that he was not in the least afraid, only that he

did n't want to do anything rash. Then the servant of the Great Company had to be unswathed so that he might stow the money in an inside pocket, and as carefully done up again, all of which took time. All the while the stars looked down on three men in evening dress, without other wraps, in a city half buried in very crystalline snow, where the thermometer indicated twelve degrees below zero, with a moderate breeze.

They got under weigh again, and in a couple of minutes the lights of the Windsor loomed large ahead. The Hudson's Bay man grew confidential, and explained that, now that he had got into the air, he could see that he had taken just a shade too much to drink. It never affected his fighting powers, but it affected his judgment, and he might go too far and kill the man, and that would be a great misfortune. He would be all right, however, if he could have the cool breeze on his forehead a little longer. He felt better already. He told the cabman to drive on down Dorchester Street for a little way.

The three said they were cold; but he said that he did n't see what difference that could make, as they did n't have to do any fighting. He would look after that. They said they were uncomfortably cold, and looked wistfully in at the red light in the windows as they passed St. James's Club. He could n't see how a little discomfort could make any difference in a matter of this sort, and told them they should be ashamed of themselves. Anyway, he did n't intend to go far. By the time they had gone around Place Viger and come back St. Catherine Street, he felt sure he would be all right.

The three huddled in a dismayed heap on the seat without breeding a reply. At Bleury they got desperate. If he wanted to go back by St. Catherine, he could go up Bleury and back that way. They were going no farther. His muffled voice, through clouds of steam, temporized and finally compromised. He would go up St. Lawrence Main and then back; and to that they had to agree. But he explained that they would have to take the responsibility; that the only reason he had suggested going farther east was that he might recover to the point where he felt that Mr. Higginson's life would be safe. He averred that his conscience told him that the St. Lawrence Main route was a shade too short; but they insisted, and took the responsibility freely.

What wind there was was westerly, and when they turned into St. Catherine they got it full in the face. It carried the white steam-frost of Montreal, and it bit terribly. The oldest of the trio once sat up and tried to swing his arms, but the operation opened up his anatomy so that he collapsed into a ball, and the youngest groaned as the edge of the seat cut into the only part of him not too numb to feel. Then they begged a horse-blanket from the driver. It was spare, and full of loose hairs and an odor, but they crawled under it and bore in silence. The driver and the figure in the front seat sat impassive, except on occasions, when the muffled voice of the figure boomed out, asking whether the "gemlen" were sure they would take the responsibility of taking him back in his present state, or whether they would drive a little farther.

At first the gentlemen reiterated that they would take the responsibility, but later they answered never a word, for a reason approximately similar to that which prompted the silence of the skipper of the famous schooner *Hesperus*.

Thus they arrived at the ladies' entrance of the Windsor. The trio crawled out, and their numb hands refused to unswathe the Hudson's Bay man, who cheerfully kept his seat until a couple of cabmen were called in to assist. They asked what he was suffering from, but the three were incommunicative. They at last said that it was a sort of cold on the chest, but a bad one. The invalid increased in cheerfulness as they were helped on with their coats and crawled into the hotel. There they clung to a radiator, where they were instructed to stay while he went to the office to find out whether Mr. Higginson was in his room. He returned, walking with precision as before, and, if possible, even more cheerful, and reported that Mr. Higginson was in his room, and, better still, that the room was in a quarter of the hotel where there were no other guests at present, so that, in all probability, no one would be disturbed. This was better than they could have hoped, and the three, thawing out, began to regain their spirits.

Their cheerfulness, however, was as nothing to that of the man from Fort Simpson. His red mustache bulged with the smiles beneath, and he careered about the little reception room like an ant on a peony bud. He gleefully recalled several scenes of bloodshed in which he had taken an active part, one at Jack McQues-

ten's, on the Porcupine River, and one on the Stikeen, his only moment of sadness being one in which he said that he was afraid he was feeling too good, and accentuated the fact that he had n't driven as far as he had intended and might n't yet be quite safe. However, on remembering that the "gemlen" had taken the responsibility, he returned to his former cheerfulness. He finished by saying that he did n't believe in letting these little jobs hang over, and if the gentlemen were warmed enough, they might as well go up and get it through with, as it would only take a few minutes at the most.

The elevator left them on their floor, and its light went on into regions above, while he trailed them through the long, darkened, deserted hall and through the swinging doors at the end. The three were strangely silent; but the man from Fort Simpson talked as freely as before. For some reason there was not a knee of the three that did not tremble; but the man from Fort Simpson walked with the same precise step. He led them as does a verger conducting sight-seers in an English cathedral. Straight down the hall a light shone through a transom.

"Tha' 's the door: he 's in there," he announced, waving his hand in the direction. The three cringed as if struck. They had thought much of this affair in the twenty-four hours, and their nerves were beginning to show the effect. The second put his hand on the Hudson's Bay man's shoulder and whispered, "Fer 'eaven's sake, ol' man, go easy!"

"Gweasy!" the reply came loud and free, and the cheerful note was still dominant. "Wha' for? He 's in

there, an' he can' get away. He insul' laay, did n' he? Now you jus' stay here, an' I 'll be back jus' 'n a minute. I 'll op'n transom so you can hear everything. Oh! "— the tone became profusely apologetic for a profound oversight,—" you 've got no place sit down. Egscuse me! "

He bounced back through the swinging doors and reappeared at once with three gilded Louis XVI chairs commandeered from one of the drawing-rooms. He set them side by side almost opposite the door with the lighted transom, and insisted that the three sit down. It may be noted here that they were becoming sober with magical rapidity. Then once more he said: " Egscuse me! Now, you gemlen jus' wait an' I 'll only be a min't'; " the last quite reassuringly, and he walked over to the door and knocked.

A deep voice said, " Come in," and the man of the Hudson's Bay pranced in — literally pranced in, and shut the door. The three had caught a glimpse of a wide-shouldered, dark-haired, sun-browned person sitting at a table covered with papers. They had seen the face before. The door no sooner closed than the transom opened, though not a word had been spoken. So far the man of the Hudson's Bay was performing like a calendar clock.

Mr. Higginson looked with evident surprise at the little wiry figure with the red hair, red mustache, blazing complexion, and ample suit, and the surprise apparently increased as the visitor turned and opened the transom, fastening it carefully with the wing-nut. The three out-

side sat petrified, staring through at the ceiling of the room.

They heard the silence broken by the man from Fort Simpson, and his tone was as cheerful and conversational as before.

"Mis-trigg'ns'n, I p'sum?" They heard Mr. Higginson say "Yes!" and they detected an irritated upward inflection. Mr. Higginson was a Harvard man. The cheerful voice continued.

"Sir, I un'rstan' you 've insul' laay in newspaper — Miss Mabel Bush, née Mrs. James Ronal'son — an' s'm' other names — don' recall resht — you know who I mean. Now, sir, any man that would insul' laay — specially 'n public — should be horse-whipped. I would lick anybody that insul' laay anyway, an' three gemlen frien's this lady gave me hunder doll'r t' lick you, besides. The gemlen 're 'n the hall waitin' t' hear you licked."

All this was delivered with deliberation, and the three looked at one another in paralyzed amazement. The last effects of the mixed drinks fled away from them in an instant, and they became utterly sober in time to hear Mr. Higginson say:

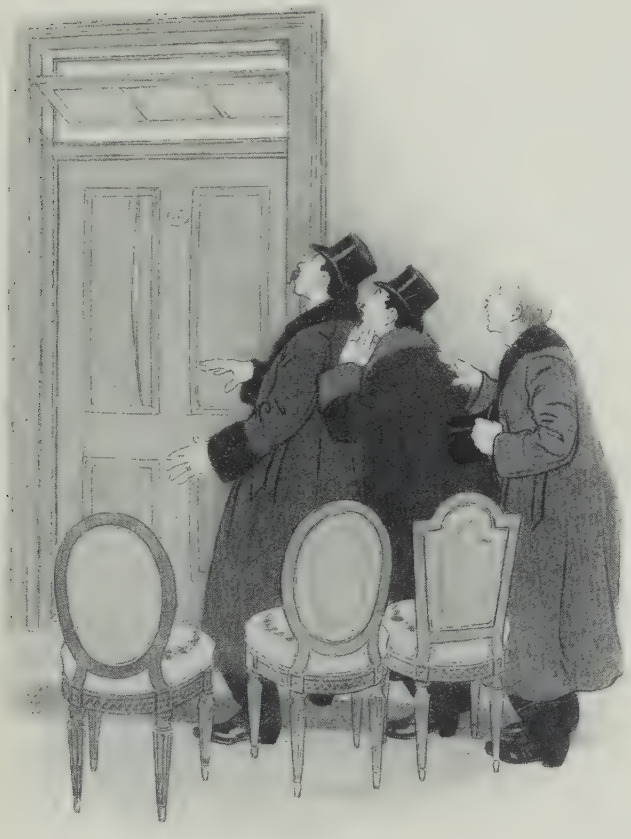
"You get out of here, you little red-headed runt, or by —"

But for some reason the Hudson's Bay man failed to appear. There was a sound of hurried footsteps, and a noise like the smack of a fist on something soft; then the indefinite mixed sounds of a struggle, terminating in a crackling smash that was coincident with a towel-

rack dissolving into a cloud of splinters. Following came the sound of pounding boots and hard breathing, as when two men roll on the floor in each other's embrace. This continued for some time, and was terminated with a rending, as of clothes, and a mixed, bursting noise that signalized the demolition of a cane-seated chair. Again came the sound of much footwork, punctuated with an occasional rain of thuds, as from fists, and a second later there was a crash against the door, which jarred and gave, while a panel split from top to bottom. The three jumped to their feet unanimously and unanimously started to flee down the hall, then looked at one another foolishly and waited, shifting from leg to leg in their excitement.

In the meantime the scene of action had removed itself to the other side of the room, and the table had evidently waltzed into the danger area and became involved in the struggle. The following forty seconds bred a pandemonium of sounds in which the explosions of two electric-light bulbs in rapid succession were inconsiderable incidents, and which included some outrageous language on the part of Mr. Higginson. Then suddenly it was patent that a spring mattress had gone down, and for a moment the language became muffled. Immediately came a somewhat complex bump, such as would be made by two men falling out of bed, and a brief interval, overcrowded with Mr. Higginson's language, in which it was evident that the combatants were struggling to regain their feet.

Then the three, watching through the transom, saw on



A panel split from top to bottom

the ceiling shadows as of the legs of a chair lifted in anger, and heard the voice of the man from Fort Simpson growl, "Ye would, would ye!" There followed two or three smashing blows from a fist and the noise of a great fall, then only the sound of a man gasping for breath, as after heavy exertion.

The three stood altogether incapable of motion while, after half a minute or so, some one, kicking aside the ruins as he came, crossed the room and opened the door. It was the man from Fort Simpson. He held a bloody handkerchief to his nose, he had no coat on, and one shirt sleeve was torn off. Otherwise he looked quite normal. His cheerfulness seemed unimpaired. The three breathed a synchronous sigh of relief.

"Well, gemlen," he said, "tha' 's pretty good job, eh? He 's not what y' 'd call much 'f fighter —'s too slow." He became explanatory. "Ye see, I could 've hit 'im before, but I wan' t' give ye some sa'sfaction fer yer hunder doll'r, an' I would 've given ye more, too, only he got t' usin' a chair, an', not wantin' t' waste any more furn'ture, I had to shtop the fight. I 'm sorry," he added apologetically; "but 't 's ne'sary. Come over an' see 'm."

They followed mechanically to where, with one arm under him, and face downward, the redoubtable Mr. Higginson lay in the corner of the room. They gazed in awe-struck silence while the champion tore off the fringe that represented the lost shirt-sleeve and put on his coat. He was still business-like.

"Le' 's turn 'm over an' show ye how li'l' I mark 'm in

the face. 'F they die, frien's don' like t' have face marked; makes 'em look horrid. 'F we turn 'im over, he 'll come to sooner."

The youngest of the trio shuddered. The man from Fort Simpson, with a heave on one leg and the slack of the coat, rolled the recumbent figure over, eliciting a slight moan. It was true that Mr. Higginson's face was quite unmarked, though it seemed very much flushed and at times the lips twitched peculiarly. The man from Fort Simpson regarded the face intently.

"Hm!" he ejaculated. The remark seemed to indicate some curiosity. Then again "Hm!" This time it meant nothing less than surprise. "Tha' 's funny!"

"What 's funny?" asked the oldest in a strained voice.

"Mos' extraor'nary!" persisted the man from Fort Simpson, with the interested enthusiasm a biologist might display in finding a nervous system in a desmid.

"What 's most extraordinary?" said the second, ununeasily.

"'S face," said the servant of the Great Company, repeating, "mos' extraor'nary."

"How do you mean; what 's the matter with it?" It was the youngest this time, and his own had grown white.

"'T' so red; looksh bad," and the man of the Hudson's Bay developed the first expression of solemnity they had seen in the period of their acquaintance.

"Look 's if he 'd bursht blood-vessel somewhere. 'S too bad!" he added sympathetically. "Nice-lookin'

man, too. Must 'a' hit 'im too hard. Always doin' that." This was addressed reproachfully to himself. He turned on the three. "I tol' ye I had n' been out 'n the air long 'nough! Ye see —" Then he remembered. "But you took the reshponsibil'ty, did n' ye? Tha' 's a'right," and he immediately returned to his former condition of cheerfulness.

He regarded Mr. Higginson again with the most unforced interest. "Looks jus' like the man I killed in Dawson did," he commented, after some study, "but he had c'nvulsions firsht, sev'ral c'nvulsions before he died. Hit 'im in the same place, only not so hard; but he was n' so big a man." The oldest of the three faced a crisis and affected poise.

"I say, you don't really think he 's much hurt, do you?"

The man from Fort Simpson became judicial.

"'T 's likely he is 'f he dies," he said. There was a long frozen silence, broken only by Mr. Higginson's uneasy breathing. The youngest spoke. His voice was uncertain.

"Had n't we better get a doctor?"

The man from Fort Simpson explained that he had been thinking about that, but that, as the outcome was uncertain, he wondered if they, the three, had n't better run down to New York for a day or two until things settled themselves a little. About him, the man from Fort Simpson, personally, they need n't worry as to it inconveniencing him. He was going away, anyway, to Hamburg,— he had a brother there,— and he could just

as well go *via* New York as by Halifax, as he had at first intended. So he would go with them. They would just have time to catch the last train to New York that night, and could send a doctor to see Mr. Higginson as they went. He was becoming more and more convinced that it was the safest plan. At this juncture a prolonged groan came from the corner, and the recumbent Mr. Higginson doubled up spasmodically and rolled over on his side. The man from Fort Simpson went over and regarded him critically, stating, as he came back, that it looked like the beginning of one of those convulsions, and that, in his opinion, the sooner something was done the better. He looked at a large gun-metal watch. They had twenty-five minutes before the train went. He suggested that they had better go and see if they could get a doctor, and that he would go to the station and get tickets and berths and meet them on the platform. They had better let him have fifty dollars with which to get the tickets.

The fifty dollars were produced forthwith, and the four crept out into the darkened hall and softly shut the door. Forty seconds later three men in evening dress and fur-lined overcoats were fleeing toward Mountain Street, and a man with a high action and a notably precise step was approaching the Windsor Station of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He never reached it.

Twenty minutes later the three men sought him in vain, and, with fear and anger in their souls, boarded the train as it pulled out.

At that precise moment, in Mr. Higginson's room, balancing himself on a decrepit, cane-bottomed chair, beside a table with a weak leg, sat the servant of the Honourable, the Hudson's Bay Company. Beside him was a glass of that mixture of ginger ale and lemon peel known to all nations as a horse's neck,— ordinarily his strongest drink,— which he was slowly sucking through a straw. On a sofa lay a member of the Windsor Hotel Company, Limited, sobbing in silence, as sobs a man overwrought by a great strain, and on the broken-down bed lay Mr. Higginson, weeping — literally weeping — tears into a wet pillow. He slowly drew a long breath and went off into a whoop of laughter, pounding the bedclothes with his boots in his ecstasy.

"Shut up, you tittering owl!" said the man of the Hudson's Bay. "You 'll wake every soul in the hotel." Mr. Higginson sat up, with the tears running down his cheeks and his left hand on the sore spot on his side.

"An' besides, he drove them near to Maisonneuve and back in their dress-suits because he said he needed their overcoats to keep warm in, so that he could fight. Oh, Lord, oh, Lord! An' when he started talkin' convulsions, I began to feel I could n't go much longer an' live; an' then when he suggested New York, an' got that other fifty dollars out of them, I had a convulsion sure 'nough."

The member of the Windsor Hotel Company, Limited, sat up weakly and steadied himself.

"I had to keep half-way downstairs so they would n't

6·10

see me," he murmured, " an' when you hit the door, they got up and started to run; but they came back. I rolled down three steps an' they never heard me."

Higginson chuckled anew.

" I tried to go easy, b-but I hit him once on the nose,—did n't I, Andy? — and he told them he tried not to mark my face, an' they took it all like bread and milk. Oh, Lord!" and Mr. Higginson lay down again and whimpered.

" I say, Andy, what are you going to do with the money?"

" Pay for the breakage, and found a library with the rest," said the man from Fort Simpson, noisily collecting the last of the horse's neck. It ended in the member of the Windsor Hotel Company claiming the privilege of replacing damaged articles, and it is on record that, on the day following, the treasurer of the Montreal General Hospital begged to acknowledge the receipt of $150 from " a friend," to be applied to " the alleviation of the suffering of inebriates."

The three in New York noted by the New York papers that Mr. Higginson had returned to that city, and noted nothing by the Montreal papers that should prevent their return as well. The oldest found waiting for him an envelope containing a note written on a Canadian-Pacific telegraph-blank. It was endorsed, " Some one sent me this. Thought you might like to see it, so am sending it along. Where were you the latter part of the week? Mab." The note read:

"Dear Higgsy: I've just got down from the North and am at the Corona. A few minutes ago three galoots, pretty decently full, came into the bar, and I gathered that they were trying to get some one to lick you because you had been writing something derogatory to the dignity of a friend of theirs, Miss Mabel Bush. A prize-fighter chap who was to meet them here turned up, but funked the job, so I've taken it on for a consideration of a hundred dollars. Get the manager to change your room to some place where we won't disturb anybody, and I'll undertake to keep them busy so that you'll have plenty of time to move. And you'd better put on a suit of clothes you don't value, as the business probably won't improve them much. You see, we'll have to give them their hundred dollars' worth somehow. They'll be outside in the hall to hear the fracas, and for the sake of the ancient days at Harvard and of good old Steve O'Donnell we'll have to do something creditable. Nominally I'm very full at present, so don't be alarmed when you see me.

"Yours, as usual,
*"Andrew Fraser."*

## THE MAN WITH THE HORSE'S NECK

THE Man with the Horse's Neck was what he was called on this side of the water. My first informant said that there was nothing peculiar in the alignment of his cervical vertebræ, but it was because of a drink he affected and claimed to like above all other drinks. It is a big teetotal drink, which the initiated know consists of a whole lemon peel cut in one unbroken spiral, with the end arched gracefully over the edge of the glass like the neck of a hackney stallion, a lump of ice, and ginger ale, *quan. suff.*, with sometimes a dash of angostura. Why he never drank at all, in the accepted sense of that word, was somewhat of a mystery, for his scruples of one sort or another were not obtrusive.

His name was Andrew Fraser. He was a trusted officer of the Honourable, the Hudson's Bay Company, and to be that he had to be a very good man indeed. He had been stationed for a long while in the far North, at Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River. When I met him in Montreal he was away on a considerable leave of absence. His striking characteristics were that he was a little man — his height was five-feet-four — that he had a large and brilliant red mustache, and that always, while I saw him, except for two awful hours, he wore a most cheerful expression.

We met at an artillery ball in the Ladies' Ordinary of the Windsor Hotel. The charming wife of a famous colonel introduced me to the wife of a civilian-who-had-retired-from-and-forgotten-the-nature-of-his-business; who, in turn, introduced me to a friend of hers who was a stranger, who introduced me to Mr. Fraser. Being similarly bereft we went in to supper together, with the stranger and the wife of the civilian-who-had-retired-from-and-forgotten-the-nature-of-his-business. The name of the lady was Mrs. James Allister Fitzgibbon and she had a bland and finished expression, for twenty-eight.

The stranger's name was no less than Constantine Godfrey Sebastian Gemmell, and I learned early that he was an architect, unmarried, and hailed from Toronto. He was very definite in his manner, so definite that his engineering friends called him the C. G. S. System, which means the Centimeter-Gramme-Second System. For the rest, he was a big dark-brown man, clean-shaven, with a warm color under his skin. He walked quickly, like an athlete, and with a little swing.

In the middle of supper I said to Mr. Fraser: "You were the man who was mixed up with a murder here in the winter, are n't you?" Mr. Fraser spluttered ginger ale into his serviette. Mrs. Fitzgibbon and Mr. Gemmell stopped talking and looked interested and we talked about tracking boats up the Athabasca, and the natural-gas well that has been burning for years at Pelican Rapids, until they composed themselves again. By the end of the supper Mr. Fraser and I had found many points of common interest.

Synchronously with the arrival of four leather-bound water ices, which the *menu* called *méringues glacées,* Mr. Gemmell took his fifth glass of champagne and became disrespectful to Montreal.

He arranged it all in a nice, logical sequence. He began with Montreal as a city. He first impressed us with its great wealth. Then he said that Sherbrooke Street, its Park Lane, was a dried-up river bed, and sometimes not very much dried-up either, and that it would be considered a disgrace in any prairie town he knew; that most of the other streets were worse; that the water system was no good; that the fire department was no good; and that therefore the municipal government was no good; that you could buy nothing good of any sort in Montreal at a fair price, and that when you had bought something bad at an unfair price you could n't get it sent home; and that the city council and the retail merchants had adopted the formula that procrastination was the secret of the elimination of undesirable things, *and* the people didn't know it. Here he turned aside to demonstrate that it all resulted from what he called "an absorption of the tendency to put up with anything without murmuring, which dominated the whole continent," and this, he proved, resulted from Protection.

Throughout this part of the lecture he had held up a lump of baked white-of-egg and vanilla ice-cream on a fork, and the ice-cream had melted and dripped through the tines. He paused to eat the husk. Afterwards he adverted to Montreal Society, which, he said, was the subject he had moved toward from the first. He had

apparently been unfortunate, and I found later this was to be understood. He opened by quoting another man who said the reason Montreal's alert could not talk was that they were afraid to say anything for fear it would be something original, and that if it was original they were afraid it might not be the Proper Thing.

Here he became very bitter. He said that the Smart Set had been working toward the Proper Thing for years instead of being their own unnatural selves, which, for a Smart Set, was inconceivable; and that they were not quite sure what the Proper Thing was, so they had to be frightfully careful. He said that at the opera or the theater, between the acts, no one visited between boxes or stalls, that after the theater no one went to restaurants to supper, but they all went home to their little beds, which was quite right and proper; that it was the only city of 400,000 in the world where there was practically no restaurant life at all; that a Greek boy, who blacked his (Gemmell's) boots, and came from Megalopolis, had said to him that in size Montreal was a city and in condition it was a country village — was he right? Mr. Gemmell said that he unquestionably was.

Mr. Gemmell finished with a general peroration to the effect that the trouble with the alert in all the towns on this side of the water was that they took themselves seriously. What a whale of a time they would have if they 'd forget about their beastly money and mix up with the intelligent people and the others a bit, as they did in London. What a lot of nice people they 'd meet; and what a lot of pretty girls. Personally he said that

he yearned toward London — and irrelevantly, that he had Box D at His Majesty's for the following Thursday night, and would we go with him.

Mrs. James Allister Fitzgibbon had been silenced and Mr. Fraser was still sucking his horse's neck through two straws and smiling. We said we would go, though we could not see how it would help him as far as London was concerned. His reply was to the effect that it made no difference; that he found no one who thoroughly sympathized with him, and that he was very lonely. (Here he almost wept. It was very pathetic.) However, he said after a silence, we were the sort of people he had been longing for; bright, intelligent, sympathetic people, and we carried him back to the old, lost days, and cheered him up. It was very good of us to come.

After that ball I returned to the ordinary walks of life, which, as I was on a holiday, consisted, to a large extent, of riding in a motor between Senneville and the Windsor Hotel and dining at great length in the evening. As Mr. Fraser was also on a holiday, I saw him frequently. Mr. Gemmell, being a man of business, I did not see until about eleven o'clock on Tuesday evening, two days before the Thursday of his theater-party. Even then it was only a fleeting glance. It was at the Corona. I was in the dining-room and he was in the cloakroom that leads to the street. The lady on my right saw him first and said:

"What is that man trying to do?" I said I did n't know — and that he seemed to be a nice-looking man,

too. She asked me if I knew him. I said "No — could n't think who he could be." There are two glass doors between the cloakroom and the dining-room, and a stout waiter was trying to keep them closed. On the other side, and visible to the minutest detail of his person, was Mr. Gemmell. He was flushed, not so much like a man in wine as a man in the full tide of victory. Upon the shelf, in the arch through which the coats are passed, he was seated on the boy who is supposed to be in charge of the cloakroom, and was engaged in patiently threading derby hats on his left arm — for in Montreal it is permitted to wear the derby hat in the evening. He was putting his fist softly through them and threading them on methodically, crown side out. I judged he had collected seven or eight. He was packing them close, to make room for more, and I could hear faintly the wailing of the boy, when something seemed to rise up from behind and he suddenly disappeared. I saw a young man start for the stairs leading to the gallery, and, listening carefully, heard some one begging the orchestra to play something loud, at once. Even above the sounds of one of Wagner's greatest efforts I could hear other sounds in the alley, but presently these died away and a waiter went past the window holding a handkerchief to his face. That was all for that night.

Later I was to learn that, after a certain stage, this interest in hats might be said to be Mr. Gemmell's only consistent feature. He preferred derby hats — new, if possible. I think he liked the crackling sound they make when you thread them on your arm. If derby

hats were not obtainable he would take silk hats, but they never seemed to make him as happy. They are troublesome to handle and not in any way effective when you hit them. In an opera hat or a soft felt he showed no interest whatever.

The next day Mr. Fraser and I went out motoring together and on the way home we stopped at an inn called Thornhill. Outside the door waited another motor, palpitating, which we recognized as belonging to a freckled Canadian of Scottish extraction, named McGuffey; and inside were Mr. McGuffey and — Mr. Gemmell. Mr. McGuffey sat cautiously on the edge of the polished bar and Mr. Gemmell stood sternly before a machine that at first glance bore some resemblance to a grandfather's clock. As we entered Mr. Gemmell thoughtfully placed three twenty-five-cent pieces in the three slots, pressed a spring slide and threw himself on the crank. The disc revolved at high speed, then stopped with a crash, with a needle pointing to a golden star. There was a brief and painful pause filled with distant mechanical sounds from the machine's interior and a fixed questioning look from Mr. Gemmell; then something seemed to give way and an avalanche of twenty-five-cent pieces poured out into a brass cup. Mr. Gemmell, smiling, bore these in two handfuls to the bar and counted them. There were at first thirty-eight, then precisely forty, which was correct. Then Mr. Gemmell greeted us and explained that the luck had turned and that he proposed beating that machine if it took all night.

He worked the handle fiercely, lavishing money on

the slots in a way that I could see gave Mr. McGuffey real pain. Finally he paused — thirty-two dollars short, to get some change. I thought that the moment had arrived to ask if Mr. McGuffey remembered that he had left his engine running, and Mr. McGuffey bolted from the room, dragging Mr. Gemmell with him. When we went out they had gone and there was a dust cloud on the evening air toward Montreal.

We followed and saw them once beyond St. Luc toll bar, bouncing carelessly eastward over the crests of the swells on Western Avenue. In town we stopped again at the Corona. Before the door, with engine at rest, which pointed to more permanence, was Mr. McGuffey's car, and inside a worried waiter came to say that in a private dining-room, to which he would act as guide, were two gentlemen who wished to speak to me. We followed on, and in the private dining-room, seated at a table, we found Mr. McGuffey and Mr. Gemmell. In front of Mr. McGuffey was a deep glass containing Scotch whiskey and water, and in front of Mr. Gemmell were two shallow glasses on stems, each containing an olive and a toothpick and nothing else. Behind us entered another waiter bearing another deep glass containing Scotch whiskey and two other shallow glasses on stems, each containing an olive and a toothpick; but beside the olive and the toothpick they contained also a foul and debilitating drink called a Martini cocktail. These were set down in front of Mr. Gemmell and we were invited to stay to dinner.

I took off my coat and turned to hang it up. In that

instant a shadow rose up before me, and my nice, new Henry Heath hat, for which I had paid five dollars in the open market, snapped across the room. Mr. Gemmell and I raced after it. I won by two feet and salved it, unhurt, under the serving-table. A booted foot flicked past my ear as I put it on. Mr. Gemmell had reached the hat stage and smiled cheerfully.

"No, you don't!" I said. I unscrewed a hook from the hanger, and, standing on the piano, screwed it in just under the ceiling. On this I hung the hat. "Now you sit down!" Mr. Gemmell sat down and the two waiters brought in caviare.

Then followed a gorgeous dinner that drew on the entire animal kingdom. The caviare introduced the ganoids; the reptiles furnished green turtle soup, and later, terrapin; from among the amphibians came the legs of frogs, and of fish there were trout from the Laurentian lakes, and haddock — with egg sauce — from Jones' Wharf, Halifax. Of the great phylum of birds I recall two, quail on toast and green-winged teal. There may have been others. Then of mammals there were ox-tongue and sweetbreads.

Mr. McGuffey plodded steadily forward with whiskey and water, and, I remember, with a dressed lettuce leaf in his hair, put in surreptitiously by Mr. Gemmell, who was becoming very playful. Mr. Fraser ate undismayed under the eternal tinkle of ever-renewed horse's necks brought in by a wondering waiter — and smiled.

In the midst of this feast, I saw Mr. Gemmell's eye glaze and his face take on a new expression. He seemed

to be meditating on scenes that were far removed. He had gone up to the Great Divide, and with one more step there would be a prospect of trouble to come. Mr. Fraser saw it at the same instant, and was prompted to make an effort. Whether any other sort of effort would have been of more use I have sometimes wondered. Probably not. In any case Mr. Fraser's star, or devil, prompted him to say jocularly that if Mr. Gemmell took one (1) more cocktail, he, Mr. Fraser, would depart and go home, *as,* if Mr. Gemmell proposed making a disgusting exhibition of himself he was not treating his guests nicely. Now this was the merest threat, for Mr. Fraser's sense of duty was so high that it would not have permitted him to go home under any conditions whatever. But it was enough for Mr. Gemmell. He had been humming like a spinning top with a small cluster of bananas in his right hand and his eyes on my distant hat, evidently making certain calculations. The humming ceased and he centered his eyes on Mr. Fraser's face.

"All right," he said briefly, "then go home!" and he laughed an unpleasant laugh.

"No, but—" said Mr. Fraser.

"Never mind, go home," said Mr. Gemmell, "and take a couple of horse's necks with y'!" Then immediately he ordered and drank three cocktails in succession, and in six minutes he became as a great king. He had been seeking a sacrifice and, behold, one was prepared. He became bitterly facetious and ragged Mr. Fraser through a half hour, while that person oc-

casionally sucked through a straw and smiled, ragged him so that he forgot my hat and I was enabled to climb on the piano and put it on, beg to be excused — to send a telephone message — and slip away, and exchange it for a Christy that had been through the wars and that I was prepared to lose. I returned wearing the Christy carelessly with intent to deceive, but with a guilty conscience. Twice I saw Mr. Gemmell look toward it, and once he said, "Is that your hat?" I replied that it was, and for proof showed him the initials inside, at a distance. He seemed satisfied and bided his time.

It now appeared that the plan was as follows: We were to go to Mr. Gemmell's room at the Windsor Hotel, where Mr. Gemmell, ever punctilious, was to dress, and we were to return to the Corona to supper. (This arrangement had been pushed on by Mr. Fraser, for several years diplomat among the Indians.) In the meantime Mr. Gemmell wished to have two more cocktails.

"So much the better," whispered Mr. Fraser to me, hardly forming the words with his lips. "Then we 'll get him down there, an' fill him up some more — he can't take *much* more — an' put him to bed." Very good! But there are no two men and no two women alike in the world. The two cocktails went their way, and the glasses with the olives and the toothpicks went behind the piano, where it sounded as if they broke. A waiter came in and presented a bill which bore also the cost of the two glasses, and was paid in notes of large denomination. The entertainment was

taking on elements of regal magnificence. The waiter carried away five dollars as his share and closed the door deferentially.

Then Mr. Gemmell opened the window. The charge for the two glasses was a little thing, but it had grieved him and he said so. He threw out three large glasses and four small ones (he put on a glove, my glove, before touching those that had contained horse's necks), four coffee cups, with saucers to match, four liqueur glasses, four fruit plates, one cut glass and silver epergne, containing oranges, apples and bananas, a handful of fruit knives, four brass finger-bowls, one porcelain combined ash-tray and match-box, five chairs and the piano-stool. They lay in the alley and he looked on them with satisfaction. Then he turned back to measure the window and the piano with his eye, but I managed to attract him away with my hat, and led on toward the exit. No, he said, he would not go out that way; he would go through the large dining-room. (I could hear Mr. Fraser behind making promises to the management. Mr. McGuffey was following like a soldier, with his motor-cap on his head.)

In the glittering light in the midst of the large dining-room, Mr. Gemmell paused, and I moved on, trusting that the force of example might be sufficient. Not in the least.

At a flower-garden of a table, surrounded by a large and dignified party, he stopped, pointing gracefully at the clock, which indicated seventeen minutes past nine, and addressed an astonished, marcelled dowager.

"You," he said severely, "should be home — *and* in bed," then smiled on the table's outraged silence, and came out through the glass doors of the night before into my arms.

"Racy old body," he commented, "I'd like to go back and talk to her again!"

After this Mr. Fraser arrived and Mr. Gemmell's brilliancy seemed to lapse. He got into his coat with the preliminary evolutions of a baseball pitcher, and reached tentatively for a whole row of hats. Mr. Fraser and I flanked him a moment too late, for he captured one. The cloakroom boy complained that it was his hat, and as Mr. Gemmell was grasping it so firmly that his fingers were through the rim, and refused to let it go, we had to promise reparation. We marched him out into the alley with Mr. McGuffey following silently and doggedly behind, and he appeared most obliging and cheerful, but beneath it all there seemed to be some little thing weighing on his mind.

We agreed to leave the cars where they were, and go down in one of Montreal's summer cabs, which is an advanced victoria, called a victorine. Mr. Gemmell said "Windsor Hotel," seated himself opposite Mr. Fraser, and then, after studying Mr. Fraser's face, recollected. It was Mr. Fraser's horse's necks and Mr. Fraser that he wished to speak about. And he spoke.

Through McKay Street into Dorchester, always jocular and with a displeasing sting in his voice, he called Mr. Fraser things that no breathing human being should stand. Mr. Fraser paid proper attention, and deferred

and smiled. Mr. Gemmell said it would not have been so bad if Mr. Fraser had done anything else in the world; but to say that if he, Gemmell, took one more cocktail, he, Fraser, would leave the party — *that* was the last thing. And, then, on top of that, Mr. Fraser's eternal — damn — horse's — necks! If Mr. Fraser would consent to apologize Mr. Gemmell might think of making it up. Mr. Fraser apologized at once. Mr. Gemmell was still not satisfied. If Mr. Fraser would apologize again and for everything, Mr. Gemmell might feel better. Mr. Fraser apologized again and more lavishly. Would Mr. Fraser repeat the apologies? Mr. Fraser repeated the apologies. Mr. Gemmell grasped his hand and immediately let go as if stung. He asked if he might be permitted to revert again to the horse's neck. He had begun to inquire exhaustively as to where it was invented, when the wheel struck the curb in front of the Ladies' Entrance at the Windsor, and before he had recovered from his surprise we were out and he had paid the cabman. He led on to a remote room on the Stanley Street side, Mr. McGuffey following close with head erect, and Mr. Fraser and I trailing behind. Mr. Fraser whispered to me:

"Do y' know this reminds me frightfully of that night in the winter, only then we went down that way," waving an arm in the direction where the Windsor Hall used to be. "I wonder if I 'm going to be involved in wrecking this hostelry again!"

Mr. Gemmell unlocked his door in a brisk, business-like fashion, flung it open so that it smote the wall,

switched on the light, and stood for some moments holding the key, apparently pondering as to the best thing to do with it. In the end he tossed it into darkness through an open door and we heard it fall in the bath-tub.

I heard Mr. McGuffey say "Hm!" and turned. In front of us in a row on the floor, freshly iced, stood four wine-coolers, and over their edges projected the necks of four quart bottles of champagne. As to how that wine reached there I have no theories at all, nor, I believe, has Mr. Gemmell. He is certain of one thing only — that it appeared ultimately in his bill. For the time being he regarded it with amazement. Then he advanced and grasped one bottle firmly by the neck. He said "Hm!" several times in different keys, and I could see that he was groping, till he brushed a hand across his eyes and stretched it out, palm up, toward Mr. Fraser.

"You came from St. John a-riginally, did n't y'?" he said. Mr. Fraser, abashed, felt in a trousers pocket and placed a jacknife, with corkscrew attached, in the outstretched hand.

"An' drinks horse's necks, too!" Mr. Gemmell added bitterly. He studied a champagne glass for a moment, then threw it behind a radiator as unworthy, and drank from a tumbler he found on the wash-stand — two tumblers full, at once. Then he said he wished to wrestle — with Mr. Fraser. He made a few preliminary movements. One of these was backward, toward me. My hat was smashed down over my eyes

and he howled with glee. The next instant Mr. Fraser and he were rolling on the bed.

Locked together they rose up and went back again, partly on bedclothes, but chiefly on the bare springs, and they bounced as in a circus net. They worked down to the foot of the bed and over toward the wall, where projected a marble mantelpiece.

"You fellows look out," I said, "or you 'll break your heads on the corner of that mantelpiece!" No one paid any attention to me, and immediately afterwards I could see that Mr. Gemmell's nose was being ground into the inequalities of a woven-wire mattress, and at once the general activity became much more marked. The wrestlers resolved themselves into a nebula. The nebula bounced and spun unevenly, like a big, woolly football, and out of it came a cravat, some other small articles of dress, some unconsidered words, and a foot. The foot rose like a flash of light and descended on the marble mantelpiece. The marble mantelpiece leaped from the wall and descended on the hearthstone, where it broke into a great many pieces and a little white dust. With it descended one expensive French traveling-clock, bound in red Russia, two cut-glass eau-de-cologne bottles with silver tops (for Mr. Gemmell had beautiful things), one travelers' ink-stand, open, with bottles containing black and red ink, and one statue of Venus de Milo, this last the property of the Hotel. Altogether it formed a rich and creamy mayonnaise.

Mr. Gemmell was so much pleased with the noise it all made that he sat up, and permitted Mr. Fraser to

sit up as well. Mr. McGuffey had removed into a remote corner, where he was partly hidden by the edge of a bureau. This retiring tendency was noticed by Mr. Gemmell, who hurled a pillow at Mr. McGuffey's head. The pillow failed to hit Mr. McGuffey, but it did hit the electrolier and of the shades one only stayed up.

"All down but nine!" roared Mr. Gemmell. "Set 'em up in the other alley!"

"You come an' wrestle with me!" he suggested. Mr. McGuffey could see Mr. Fraser searching for two buttons belonging to his coat, and said no, he would rather not.

"Then I 'll go fetch you!" said Mr. Gemmell, and he went, over the foot of the bed. Mr. McGuffey opened fire with the ice-pitcher, and it broke against the wall. Then he turned to the bureau and began with an ebony-backed hand-glass. There followed several brushes and an assortment of articles in leather. Mr. Gemmell replied with the contents of a small bag, and for thirty joyful seconds the air was full of sponges, soap-boxes and knick-knacks, and the noise was something terrific; at the end of which time the bristle side of a silver-backed hair-brush struck him fairly in the mouth, and he paused.

Mr. Fraser and I looked at each other in trepidation, for up to that time we had done all we could to avoid real war. Now here is where the Psychological-Study part would come in: and it would have a most important bearing on things to come. Mr. Gemmell rubbed his upper lip, and retired, and sat down on the bed and

said "Hmm!" This was all. Then he began with great deliberation and emphasis:

*"'A fool there was and he made his prayer*
*(Even as you and I!)'"*

Here he paused impressively.

*"'To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair'—*

Excuse me," he said to me, "but will *you* let me get at that trunk!" I climbed down, and he raised the lid and took out, I remember, one frock-coat and waistcoat, five other suits, thirteen dress shirts, and many undergarments and small things that I do not remember at all, and piled them on the floor among the broken glass. From the bottom he brought up a framed copy of Mr. Kipling's *Vampire,* which he bore back to the bed. He studied it for some moments upside down; then turned it over, and began again:

*"'A fool there was and he made his prayer*
*(Even as you and I!)'"*

(Pause, looking at Mr. McGuffey, who seemed wrapped in melancholy.)

*"'To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair*
*(We called her the woman who did not care),*
*But the fool he called her his lady fair'"—*

"Don't!" said Mr. McGuffey, mournfully.

*"'(Even as you and I!)'"* Mr. Gemmell persisted.
*"'Oh, the years we waste and the tears we waste'"—*

(He was chanting it now)

*"'And did not understand.*
*A fool there was and his goods he spent*
*(Even as you and I!)'"*

(Pause. Great misery.)

*"'Honor and faith and a sure intent'"*—

"Don't!" wailed Mr. McGuffey, "'Stoo true, 'stoo true. Don't! — I knew 'girl once —" But Mr. Gemmell was proceeding, and he finished it, and read it over again with thunders of new emphasis and with perfect enunciation (which was remarkable) seven times by count. And at the seventh repetition, Mr. McGuffey lay over on his trunk and wept aloud.

After this there was a period of comparative quiet, except for Mr. Gemmell tramping round in the broken glass, and at the end he announced that he was about to dress, which he prepared to do in the ordinary way, by undressing first. *Now,* he said, he had changed his mind and wished to wrestle just once more. Mr. McGuffey was again the choice and this time was dragged, with tear-dimmed eyes, to the bed, and things went back into chaos. Mr. Gemmell seemed very slippery, and once, amid groans from Mr. McGuffey, he looked up to ask if the toe-hold was barred. We said it was and he said he was sorry to hear that and would have to do the best he could without it. We finally had to attract him away with my hat and Mr. Fraser's. He got both at last. While he was dangling the outraged brims on his bare arms, with McGuffey's and two of his own, Mr. Fraser and I consulted and decided that as all methods

of killing him seemed ineffective we had better leave him and trust for the best. Mr. McGuffey would come with us — he also wished to dress. We told Mr. Gemmell that we should expect him in due course at the Corona, and we left him waltzing among the wreckage.

Mr. Gemmell failed to arrive; at least, until the next afternoon. At ten o'clock in the morning I visited his room. The door was unlocked and I entered. Some agency had collected the six suits of clothes and the mattress and the bedclothes in a pile in the middle of the room, and on this pile he was sleeping uncomfortably, face downward, and with his feet higher than his head. He was clad in broadcloth and silk and satin and fine linen, with his opera hat near his head and his tie wonderfully tied. I put him to bed as properly as I could and came away.

In the afternoon Mr. Fraser was with me when a terrible voice through the telephone presaged his coming. He said he was unwell, and he would like to come in for a little while. When he arrived, spotless, but with burning eyes, his remorse was profound. But he said that he had had three Collinses and already his physical health was better. He did not want any sermons but would we be good enough to tell him what he had done during the evening of the day before — that is, if we happened to know. He hoped that he had not destroyed any hats of ours. He could find no hats, nor traces of hats. (I have sometimes wondered whether he ate them.)

Then we took turns in telling him, as far as we could

remember, just what he had done and how he had done it, until he rocked to and fro and said he was a bestial ass and that he was throwing himself away, and that he must have another Collins. This procured he gave us a catalogue of the drinks he had drunk up to the time he began to forget, and we filled in the rest. And when we looked back and recalled him, moving through his various scenes, quite perfect, at least in both speech and gait, we marveled. He took it modestly, ordering still another Collins — making five. Mr. Fraser protested.

"See here," he said, "this is the evening of your theater party!"

"That's why I'm taking 'em!" Mr. Gemmell explained. Almost immediately he had a revulsion of feeling.

"Boys, I'm going down to destruction!" he said, holding his head between his hands. Now, neither he nor I, nor probably Mr. Fraser, dreamed that this was a prophecy to be early and notably fulfilled. Yet it was so.

With that fifth drink the revulsion passed and he showed some signs of cheerfulness. From that time onward through five hours Mr. Fraser and I toiled without ceasing and without thanks to limit him even a little.

His attitude in the box was beyond reproach. His attitude at supper was beyond reproach — until he remembered Mr. Fraser and Mr. Fraser's horse's necks and went back to them, to the exclusion of all other subjects. Some genial influence seemed to have combined his

oratorical and his critical stages. He told most ingenious and amusing stories about Mr. Fraser and his horse's necks; he composed canticles and hymns about them, and sang them; he constructed limericks about them, and recited them beautifully, until he was really funny, and the two young ladies who had spent six years in Paris and Mrs. James Allister Fitzgibbon almost suffocated with laughter. All the time Mr. Fraser drank horse's necks and smiled and shared with me the honor of being an inconspicuous feature in the entertainment. (And still Mr. Fraser impressed me as being one of those men who dislike being laughed at by any sort of woman.)

Finally, when the ladies had been escorted to their homes, we returned to that supper-room, dimly lighted with crimson-shaded candles. As we slid our chairs to one end of the table Mr. Fraser said, "Gemmell, you 've talked a good deal about horse's necks in the last thirty-six hours — d' y' think it would do you any good if I did take a drink with y'?" Mr. Gemmell replied that he did n't know that it would do *him* any good, but he felt sure it would do Mr. Fraser a great deal of good. Mr. Fraser in his turn replied that he was not so sure about that, but he had been thinking it over and had come to the conclusion that it might do Mr. Gemmell more good than anything else in the world.

In our short acquaintance the servant of the Great Company had always impressed me as a deliberative personage with a kindly tendency. Now it suddenly struck me that he was painfully altered. His voice had a new, dry, blighting quality, and his smile had departed as

softly as stars under rising clouds. I think even Mr. Gemmell noted the change, for he seemed furtive and uneasy.

In the meantime a waiter brought brandy, of which the servant of the Great Company took a drink such as I have only once seen given to a man — and he had just been saved from drowning. Seven minutes later by the watch he took another, and six minutes after that a third, while Mr. Gemmell strove to keep pace, all the while throwing a mantle of untrammeled and critical speech over heaven and earth. Then Mr. Fraser became notably quiet: he seemed to be troubled. Near the end of the fifth brandy-and-water the area of depression spread. I had no particular wish to speak and Mr. Gemmell was visibly awed. A grim silence softly settled down over that table. When this had become painful, Mr. Gemmell assumed an air of levity and addressed Mr. Fraser.

"What d' you mean, anyhow, when y' said that your taking a drink would do me more good than anything in the world?" The man from Fort Simpson considered. Finally, with a fathomless manner, he said:

"Oh, noth' m'much!" and smiled frightfully. His speech was dissolving, which, after the uncanny perfection of Mr. Gemmell's was a relief. And he realized it, for his next effort was much slower and more careful.

"Yes, but," persisted Mr. Gemmell, "you *must* have meant something!" This seemed self-evident and the two looked at each other solemnly and nodded. Mr.

Fraser spoke after long-sustained concentration and with terrible precision.

"I meant"— then he repeated it to get an unblemished start —"I meant tha — *tif* I permit myshelf take somethin' dring, 't duss" (he had Highland blood somewhere and it was coming out now) "'t duss not abrogate my views *but* 't reinforsh my persishns —!"

"Y' what?" asked Mr. Gemmell, puzzled.

"My per — Sishush —'T makes me more persh —" The effort blew off like the cramped escape of moist steam.

"More what?" Mr. Gemmell inquired. The servant of the Great Company reformed his center, called up his reserves, and steadied for one final advance.

"More per-sh — Stent!" he whooped.

"More persistent! Well, how 's that affect me?"

"Oh, lots o' ways!" said Mr. Fraser, comprehensively waving an arm abroad and smiling once more. (So far as I know this was his last smile of any sort for that night.) To Mr. Gemmell this reply was inadequate and unsatisfactory. Mr. Fraser fell in his estimation. I could see that his slow-earned awe was lessening. Above everything, he did not perceive that he was on the brink of a yawning gulf. He ventured to turn again to an interesting subject. He alighted once more on Montreal, P. Q., and made an exhaustive, a transcendent search among the city's very vitals. He castigated Society anew and skipped without effort to Sewage. He said that Montreal in winter would be fairly decent if they 'd only shovel snow — but if they

did shovel snow likely they 'd dig it up, and that would spoil everything again; in early spring it was a swamp — because they had n't shoveled snow; in late spring it dried up and left a kind of patent dust — that they got from never cleaning the streets — which blew around and gave you tonsilitis; and in summer everything dried up — includin' the water-works — and gave you typhoid." Mr. Gemmell rose in his place.

"Think of the greatest city in the greatest colony of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen being run like that!" he concluded. "Go up on the top of Mount Royal, an' gaze down on its cathedrals an' its marble palaces in their beds of verdure, an' the slow-moving St. Lawrence, an' the distant, purple hills, an' — think of it!"

"Yesh," responded Mr. Fraser, taking a gulp of raw brandy that should have brought tears to the eyes of a bronze bust, "Yesh — gwup on Moun' Royal!"

"An' think of it!" added Mr. Gemmell, after recovering from the interruption.

"Go-*Wup* on Moun' Roy'l!" repeated the servant of the Great Company with emphasis: "Go — *Wup* on Moun' Roy'l! Mon'real's a'right. I like Mon'real. Nice placsh! Shomer Park 'n' everywhere 'sh nice plasch. Very, very fond Mon'real. *Gwup* — I mean *come* up Moun' Roy'l — *now!*" sweetly.

"Come up Mount Royal — now!" repeated Mr. Gemmell dimly, "what for?" There was a steely glitter in the man from Fort Simpson's blue eyes.

"Wha' for!" he replied with a soft, reminiscent

fondness. "I don't know — I 'll think 'bout that. Maybe I 'll drop y' down other side. I 'll shee," he concluded in meditation.

"I 'm not goin' up!" said Mr. Gemmell. The man from Fort Simpson eyed him sadly.

"Oh, yesh-you-are!" he said. "An' I 'm goin' *take* y'. You git up 'n' gitcher hat 'n' coat on't once."

"I 'm not going up the Mountain!" said Mr. Gemmell, endeavoring to be explicit. Mr. Fraser slowly arose and went around, navigating by the edge of the table. He brought Mr. Gemmell's coat.

"Thish arm!" he said. Mr. Gemmell put it on, protesting. His opera hat was a small mark on the wall.

"You put hat on y'-shelf!" he instructed. Mr. Gemmell paused.

"*You put* —" he began again. Mr. Gemmell acquiesced.

It in some way recalled the night before, when he had been smitten on the mouth with the bristle side of the silver-backed brush.

"Now — come!" said Mr. Fraser.

"I 'm not going up any moun —" The servant of the Great Company reached across and his hand closed on Mr. Gemmell's biceps. It was a large hand for a little man.

"Come on — will y'?" he said, and he passed out swiftly and unsteadily, dragging Mr. Gemmell by the arm.

I was utterly forgotten and neglected. What, I won-

dered, in the name of all that was wonderful, was about to happen now. I found a waiter, explained, pulled on my coat, and followed. The office clock said twenty minutes to three and the night clerk said two gentlemen had gone out hurriedly. I passed into the June night. Guy Street was deserted and I stopped to listen. A cat bolted across the road; an alternating arc-lamp hummed; a night-hawk screamed overhead and dropped with a whirr, and from far up toward Sherbrooke Street came the sound of rapid and uneven feet on a plank sidewalk. So in that direction I started in pursuit.

A hundred yards ahead I saw them, leaving the sidewalk as too cramped, cross Sherbrooke Street under the electric light and ramp on up the hill.

Mr. Fraser was still leading Mr. Gemmell by the arm, and they were moving with considerable speed, but with uncertain direction. I caught up only after some minutes' toil, and joined them without drawing comment of any sort. Occasionally there came a murmur from Mr. Gemmell that I deemed meant protest, and once when he lagged, to try to kick over one of three ash-barrels, Mr. Fraser gave rise to a sort of snarl, and they proceeded again immediately.

The silence was eased by the swishing of the tree tops in the soft night wind, and I felt a few drops of rain. The rain increased; not tentatively, but in a business-like way and at once. It ran inside my patent-leather shoes, and I felt it batter on my starched shirt front, and buttoned my coat. At last, as we turned sharp to the right into a road that rounded the corner

of an overhanging brick house, Mr. Fraser said it was going to rain, and I read the name Cedar Avenue indistinctly in the dark. Also, the inhabitants of this part seemed to be putting in a sewer, and all the earth was in a state of upheaval. Several times I caught a glimpse of a nine-foot chasm, with water in the bottom.

The man from Fort Simpson, trained on candle ice and muskegs, swung through these intricacies like a young planet in its orbit, leading the unfortunate Mr. Gemmell as he would a dog and leaving me to follow my own precarious course.

But Mr. Fraser was trending across the road toward what appeared to be unbroken forest that rose sheer toward heaven. I could hear Mr. Gemmell complaining and asking if he knew where he was going. The servant of the Great Company replied, "Come on —" and the rest was most discourteous. Then we struck into a sort of bridle-path that climbed the mountain among second-growth birches. The birches dripped quantities of water, and the bridle-path ascended and descended and coiled itself through that moist woodland as the trail of a serpent through wet grass. Besides, it was very muddy and very slippery. I heard Mr. Gemmell say that his dress suit was being spoiled, but Mr. Fraser only grunted and drove ahead. All this time we were going fast. At one place we stopped and were conducted to a fence.

"Tha 's Wes'mount!" Mr. Fraser explained, waving his arm over the steamy sea of arc-lights far below. "When I was here fifteen years ago — nothin' there

'tall — Come on, you — ! " and Mr. Gemmell resumed his journey, speechless, for a Toronto architect has never learned to run with a dog-train seventy miles in a day, and Mr. Fraser had. This was becoming a personally conducted tour for both Mr. Gemmell and myself. We sweated along in the open rain and approached another towering wall of woodland, and in the face of that dim barrier we left the beaten road once more and followed, by touch alone, an obscure path along the crest of a high ridge.

As to clothes, I was long past caring; my curiosity was all that remained. Far along that path, with the road close below to the left, the servant of the Great Company paused where it was very dark. There was a short interval filled with a dull clinking of metal, another pause, a brief struggle, and then sounds as if some one were drowning. I groped my way forward to find that Mr. Fraser had placed one of the City of Montreal's riveted sheet-steel drinking-fountains, had opened the tap and was holding Mr. Gemmell's six feet of length underneath, face up — as if the rain were not enough.

" Yo 're too drunk to 'preciate what I 'm goin' do t' y'," he was explaining, " but thish ought t' help y' a lot ! " As I came up Mr. Gemmell broke away, coughing, and fled down the hill toward the road. The little man pursued with bad language and I stood listening to the crackling underbrush. Then it occurred to me that if I were to catch up in that black wilderness I had better move. At the bottom I could hear nothing but

the dripping leaves in the moist darkness. The expedition seemed to have vanished altogether, and following the road I came out in a bed of cannas. In the center of the bed stood a post bearing three signs, and as I was utterly lost I limbed the post and read the signs. One said "*To the cemeteries.*" Probably not necessary yet, but it was well to have one convenient. Another said "*To the city.*" Surely not, if Mr. Fraser could help it. The third said "*To point of observation.*" This seemed to suit me, so I went.

A little above me on my left appeared to be the mountain's summit. I moved forward by a road that no longer rose but swung gradually to the right till it trended downward a little and I came out, as I could see dimly, on a large, level, open space. Beyond the farthest edge of this space which was guarded by a dark railing, there welled up, milk-white through the steam out of the abyss, the lights of the city of Montreal. In the center of the space, in the driving rain, kneeled the ferocious Mr. Gemmell, and beside him, with a hand on the back of his neck, and rocking slightly, stood Mr. Fraser in the attitude of a man lost in thought.

The servant of the Great Company turned to me and spoke without effort but with reproach in his voice.

"Been waitin' for you!" he said. Then, after a pause in which he straightened up and put a restraining foot on Mr. Gemmell's shoulder, "Been wonderin' w'at 'sh bes' thing do-with-'m. Of coursh," he continued, widely, "can do lotsh' 'things — lotsh 'n' lotsh things,

— but most of 'em are n't bad'nuff. Kill 'm too quick — no s't'sfaction f'r th' work. Oh, well," he brushed the troublesome details away with a wave of his hand, "plenty time t' think 'bout that. *Come on!*" he said, addressing Mr. Gemmell, and Mr. Gemmell, dragged by the collar, arose and stumbled forward. From the southeast, the guard rail, a balustrade in ornate stone, swept round in the arc of a circle past the breast of the city until it faced full to the westward.

Mr. Fraser marched up to the balustrade near its eastern end, and looked over. Mr. Gemmell shrank back.

"You scared?" he queried. "*Come on!*" and Mr. Gemmell plunged forward head first and was held on his stomach half over the cornice of the balustrade.

"Oh, Lord, don't!" he whimpered.

"Shut-tup!" growled Mr. Fraser, "an' don' mar my 'preciation of this beaut'ful scene."

Thirty feet beneath the balustrade was the ground, dark and indistinct, dropping steeply down to steeper woods and the lesser wooded slopes, until the lights began, dazzling white arcs and glaring yellow incandescents, swung in intricate curves and grouped into curious clusters like the stars of constellations seven hundred feet below. They stretched, thousands upon thousands of them, a great, glittering diamond and jargoon mantle.

And high up in the dark sky above, the pitiless rain beat on the back of the neck of Mr. Constantine Godfrey Sebastian Gemmell.

Mr. Fraser sighed deeply, and from the slack of Mr.

Gemmell's clothes released one hand with which to make a majestic gesture.

"Thish," he said, with evident emotion, sweeping the free arm across that whole glittering, steam-bathed sea, "ish th' magnif'shent city you dared to malign, you — giraffe-necked coyote. You!" He spoke with sonorous cadence, "In my great country"— his thumb indicated a stretch of the Mackenzie River two thousand miles behind his right shoulder —"th' fac' that you came from Ontario would be s'ficient. They would say 'He comes from — Ontario *an'* he carries copper centsh t' put in the c'lection,' an' they would pass by on the other side. Now, sir, will you 'pologize?" Mr. Gemmell gasped something to the effect that he would, for he was only then beginning to get his wind and the spirit had utterly gone out of him. He commenced to murmur, but I failed to catch the import. The man from Fort Simpson kneaded him into the stone cornice and roared, "No, not t' me: t' Mon'real!" The murmuring ceased in pain and began again. The roar was repeated: "Not that way, *come* off o' that, will y'!" Mr. Gemmell came.

The cornice of that balustrade is supported by twenty major columns, and over each, as a capital, rests a block of stone twenty by twenty-four inches. To one of the easternmost of these altars the servant of the Great Company dragged his captive.

"Git up!" he said. Mr. Gemmell hesitated and was lifted swiftly into place from behind and instructed to kneel.

"For Heaven's sake, look out!" he faltered. "I don't mind a joke, y' know —"

"Thish 'sno joke!" said Mr. Fraser, briefly. The prisoner knelt, facing a remote Maisonneuve and the oncoming dawn. Beneath him in front was sheer space. The up-flung glare showed his face, sober, scared, and sickly white, with the southeast rain beating full in his eyes. The man from Fort Simpson moderated his voice down to a reassuring pitch.

"I 've got hol' o' y'r feet, so y 're a'right so long as y 're good. Gimme y'r hat." It was passed back, and the servant of the Great Company spared a hand to collapse it and whirl it in the direction of the Angus shops.

"Should a' been soaked in kerosene an' set fire to so we could see it fall. Now — begin!" The apology commenced faintly. I could hope to give no reproduction of that scene. Beginning with the River St. Lawrence and Dominion Park, Mr. Gemmell apologized particularly to every institution I had heard of in that section of the city and many I had not. Then he was pulled down off his base by the feet, moved forward to the capital of the next pillar, and set up again, and the district overlooked by that pillar was gone through in detail as before; and so down the length of the balustrade, Mr. Fraser dictating in a powerful voice and the responses coming back to us softly as from a timid bridegroom.

I gathered that the Montreal City Council was a wise and beneficent body blessed with a beautiful judgment,

"I've got hol' o' y'r feet, so y're a'right so long as y're good"

and that the intelligence of the Fire Department stood unequaled in all the fair earth. The conductors of the street-cars shone in efficiency, in knowledge, and in great courtesy, and the loving-kindness and the generosity of the Allan Line to its patrons was as that of a mother to her children. The merchants were kind-hearted men who set store by little profits and gave of the world's best, and, as to time, their word was fulfilled as though it were an oath they held sacred above all other things. The streets were fair and cleanly ways, paved as with marble, and a soft-voiced police spent its time in conducting the aged and the infirm. (Here Mr. Gemmell was moved on to the next pillar.)

The man from Fort Simpson warmed to his work, and Mr. Gemmell, constantly instructed to speak louder, whooped into the gentle rain that the city water tasted like " the waters of a woodland spring " (" With a dead porcupine in it," said Mr. Fraser, *sotto voce,* to me) and that not in any country " might a man live in such — what ? "

" 'Maculate cleanl'ss —"

"— immaculate cleanliness, with such perfect — cuisine, on such inconsiderable expenditure, as in a McGill College Avenue boarding-house — or any other Montreal apartment."

Rocking carelessly on the brink of the abyss with one casual hand holding down Mr. Gemmell's feet, Mr. Fraser rumbled again: " If he knew how some o' these things hurt me he would n't feel so bad as he duss." At the fifth pillar the last effects of the exercise and of the

various liquors had gone, and as he knelt in the new pool of water he was visibly shivering. But the ornate rhetoric continued.

"Nowhere in the world is the conspicuous element of society more notably metropolitan, holding its place more in virtue of its breadth, its intelligence, its culture, and its well-bred unobtrusiveness than in this great city," was one of the periods; and there were others, more finished and stately, that I cannot recall.

Over the sixth and seventh and eighth pillars Mr. Gemmell was conducted with the same unwavering solemnity, growing evidently more chilled and miserable as he went, while the cold, deliberate dawn whitened up in the northeast till the rain and the city turned gray together. At the ninth pillar there were symptoms of his being unwell, and at the tenth he was violently ill. At the close of the paroxysm Mr. Fraser said: "Now proceed; get ahead — y' know. I have n't nicely started on you yet." What his plans as to the disposal of Mr. Gemmell's body might have been I never knew, for on the passage from the tenth to the eleventh pillar, Mr. Gemmell, in the flick of an eyelash, turned and fled across the open space toward the road by which we had come, leaving the servant of the Great Company with his overcoat. In less than one more second Mr. Fraser had gone also and the overcoat lay at my feet. When I saw them last, Mr. Gemmell had turned to the right into a path that led up the mountain, running like a frightened rabbit, and the man from Fort Simpson was gaining at every leap.

My duty was doubtless to follow after, but the speed looked trying and I felt that if I kept on their lower flank, between them and the city, and fresh, I could capture them when it became necessary.

Once, looking up through moose-wood and birch branches, almost over my head, I could see Mr. Fraser with what seemed to be a piece of dress coat in his hand, reaching across a sort of rock chimney at something I failed to make out on the other side. Immediately afterward there was a sound as if a heavy body were falling from a great distance through thousands of small branches, which ended in a thud in the soft moss not twenty feet from where I stood. At once some one, breathing heavily, broke past me downhill, hidden in the leaves, and in the same instant I saw Mr. Fraser cast himself through the air into a solitary spruce tree and come down Indian fashion, facing the trunk open-armed, and with the branches sliding under his outstretched legs. He was running when he struck, but, though he arrived very quickly, falling is quicker, and Mr. Gemmell was thrashing through the leaves fifty yards downhill. The man from Fort Simpson passed me with a snarl like a wolf, and with a bit of cloth in one hand, and I said to myself: "Who am I that I should interfere with an instrument of Heaven."

They wound like the course of a running ostrich, but by sliding down steep paths I headed them once more almost on the edge of civilization. There, back to a tree, in a glade carpeted with young ferns, in the full dawn, stood Mr. Gemmell, in trousers and the rags of

a shirt, and with terror in his eye, and Mr. Fraser, a red-headed devil in clinging evening dress and with an opera hat worn carefully on the back of his head, dancing about him with two handfuls of shredded clothes. As I appeared he made one more rush and the remnants of Mr. Gemmell's shirt came off as nearly in two halves as could be. The occasion needed rising to.

"See here, you chaps," I said, "come home. It 's daylight!" Mr. Fraser paused.

"Wha' for?" he said in an abstracted voice.

"Come home for my sake, like a good chap!" And slowly he softened.

"Yes, f'r your sake, I 'll go home. You 've been a faithful fr'en'. An' t'night, 's soon as it 's dark, we 'll start in on this coyote again, an' we 'll kill 'm, won' we?"

"Yes," I said, "we 'll kill him; but we 'll go home now!"

"Yes, we 'll go home now." He turned to Mr. Gemmell.

"Go 'ome!" he roared, stamping his foot. Mr. Gemmell winced and looked about him as a man preparing for flight.

"Oh, he 'll come with us, too, so that we 'll have him for to-night," I said. "Here, put on this overcoat." Mr. Gemmell hid his nakedness in that disreputable garment, and we moved off the ground, my arm in Mr. Fraser's and Mr. Gemmell following behind.

I saw them both in bed, and Mr. Fraser appeared at

eight o'clock breakfast. Mr. Gemmell we did not see again for some days, and then only on the other side of the street. He was not coming in our direction.

Now this is quite irrelevant, but as it contains the moral, without which no story is written, it may as well be noted. I know that from that night to this day Mr. Gemmell has gone to the white ribbon extremity of drinking nothing whatever of an overstimulating nature; which was doubtless an end to be desired.

## THE A-FLAT MAJOR POLONAISE

THIS happened in the autumn. The female part of the yachting season, when everything was joyful and no man of the crew could prophesy what might happen next, had come to its sad end some time before. There followed a between-time period, with much brass polishing in the engine-room and two short shooting-trips. Three or four times snow had lain on the *Rorqual's* decks, to stay in some crevices on the shady side of the deck-house till ten o'clock in the morning.

One day, after carrying an eight-pound twelve-bore gun from dawn till three in the afternoon, over fallen leaves and through swamps already half full, I arrived in a receptive and tolerant mood, to find one maid arguing with the expressman, who did not appear to be feeling very well, and three of the biggest trunks I have ever seen lying in the drive. From the house, through closed windows and doors, proceeded the " Don Juan " Fantaisie,— no less,— and it came as the sound of a full orchestra, and the windows trembled, for that piano was a concert grand.

The expressman had been imported direct into Nova Scotia from Bermondsey, S. E., where he had carted leather. As I came up, he was saying: " Ow, yuss, I can carry 'em up alone, too, if I want t'; but I down't

want t'. If I could maik 'alf 's much noise 's that," indicating the thunder from the front of the house, " I 'd carry one o' these 'ere rownd on each finger, I would, jus' t' show wot I could do," and he smiled a blighting smile.

" He 'll lend us a hand, Jimmy," I said, referring to the pianist, " and we 'll travel them up in no time." I went in, and we embraced like royal personages.

" Now the expressman thinks he 's killed, so come out and give us a lift with your —" I hesitated.

" Box-cars — coal-barges — canal-boats — scows — lighters — anything you please," he finished. " Don't mind me; I 'm only the one who has to lug 'em round and fight for 'em. I 've got a dummy piano and about sixty books in that long one, and — oh, all sorts of things in the others." He took the forward end in a herculean hand, and the trunks went up on the run, with the man from Bermondsey tottering behind, and me hovering amidships and getting jammed into corners.

" How long are you going to stay?" I ventured to ask.

" Don't be silly!" he said. " How do I know? Like any servant-girl, depends on how you treat me and how I like it. Now, if you interrupt me again before I have that thing played through three times,— to carry trunks or anything else,— I 'll shoot," and he strode away, pulling from his right hip pocket a heavy, nickel-plated pair of wire-pliers and waving them at me as he went. As the piano started again, I heard the expressman snarl and whip up his horse.

Every one, most especially including the feminine part of the household, was overjoyed that he had come at last. We only feared the time when he would go, knowing that this might be controlled by no one. A year before, when the *Rorqual* had been lying in another harbor, he had passed through the town. He stopped long enough to hire a horse, drive till he found us, come aboard, eat a doughnut, and swear that he would come to stay on the way back. Instead, he had disappeared into the Far West without giving any sign whatever. Now he came in an equally characteristic way, out of nowhere, unannounced, with a carload of baggage, and began to play the " Don Juan " Fantaisie.

Without question, he was one of the world's greatest pianists. His ambition was without any limit that I ever saw, but as simple as the great pyramid. I have no doubt that tribulations and disappointments and sorrows stood up in his pathway as with the rest of us, but he seemed to ride on and over them with as much detachment and disinterest as the little god Juggernaut in his towering car. He worked, it might be three, it might be six, hours a day, but when he eased up from the racking nervous strain, either in city or country, instead of flying to some foolish extreme for relief, he took the most profound care of himself, lived with an ascetic kind of cleanliness, and yet without any sort of bigotry. But he had to do something. All great pianists have to do something; otherwise they would blow up. In his case he turned naturally to walking; but sometimes even walking, which is a great and healthful

exercise, is not enough. If he always walked enough to make him perfectly safe, he might not have time for anything else, as is the case with many other people. So, beside the walking,— and this is what I have been working toward,— he was ready at any moment for any pure devilment, excepting, as mentioned before, only those things that were forbidden by his creed; and herein lay one of his greatest charms. He also, I knew, turned naturally to the mysteries of after dark and had a morbid curiosity for the unexplored. And so, to recapitulate, in his work he was a person of great dignity, filled with the faith that does not make haste, but is content to perform chromatic octaves and Cramer and the Forty Daily Studies by the year; and in his play he was as irresponsible as the Northern Lights, and more dangerous.

Every morning of this visit, fair weather or foul, he would get up at some unknown hour,— sometimes if I happened to wake long before daylight I would hear him moving about,— and he would disappear, and with him would disappear half a basket of grapes. He would be back for an eight o'clock breakfast and report where he had been and what the white frost looked like at sunrise, and we would find that he had covered perhaps seven, perhaps ten miles. Then, after breakfast, after elaborately massaging his hands and going through some mysterious preliminary exercises that required a towel hung up on the wall on a level with his head, he would retire to the music-room and close all available doors, and the piano would break into song.

"I've been thinking about this piano for the last fifteen hundred miles," he said.

For three mornings he plowed through amazing clouds of scales, arpeggios, involved exercises, and Czerny studies, but reverted always to some glittering complication in the "Don Juan" Fantaisie. On the fourth morning he treated himself to a concert, and for three full hours no maid or other person in that household did any sort of useful work. They stood or sat behind convenient shelters and listened.

Ye musicians, this was his program, and in part only.

*Weber:* Mouvement Perpétuel de Sonate, Op. 27.
*Rachmaninoff:* Prelude, Op. 3.
*Beethoven:* Sonata in C minor.
*Chopin:* Study in F minor. Waltzes in Db, C♯ minor, and E minor. Impromptu Fantaisie, C♯ minor.
*Liszt:* Gnomen Reigen.

(Here, apparently, he began to warm up.)

*Chopin:* Ballade in Ab. Barcarole.
*Mendelssohn-Liszt:* Wedding March (Midsummer Night's Dream.)

(Here the gardener came to rest on a wheelbarrow beneath the music-room window.)

*Rubinstein:* Grande Staccato Etude de Concert.
*Schubert-Liszt:* Erlkönig.
*Wagner-Liszt:* March, from Tannhäuser.
*Liszt:* Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 2.
*Mozart-Liszt:* "Don Juan" Fantaisie.

As the last echoes died down, the cook, whose head had been motionless in the dumb-waiter for forty minutes,

said: "Aw, why did he stop? But I suppose the poor man must be tired."

I said, oh, no, I did n't think so at all; only that it was very trying to the nerves. And she said yes, she supposed it must be. It proved that I was right, for as I went in, I saw him bolt through a French window, stoop to throw a handful of gravel at a visiting cat, and start running round and round two flower-beds. The change of climate no doubt had something to do with it, for the Nova Scotia air in the autumn, when you can see fifty miles through white sunlight, is very bracing; but from the time of that concert his general exhilaration became so great that at times it was difficult to deal with.

The next morning he began with scales in torrents, and as he went on, I could hear that he was wilfully neglecting the "Don Juan" Fantaisie. Then followed a longish silence. Then of a sudden he came thundering down on the four lower E♭'s, and broke into Chopin's A♭ Major Polonaise (Opus 53). I stopped outside the door, transfixed, and through other parts of the house heard doors softly open and stay open, while he led his hosts up that whole triumphant pathway, until the last great chords, having attained to pure glory, died out again into silence, and in the silence the doors softly closed, one by one.

In that moment he began on certain details of that great polonaise, and he worked at them at intervals, with a twenty-minute stop for a wholly silent lunch, for seven consecutive hours. The day following and the day after

were nearly as bad, and as he came out into the sunlight on the third afternoon trying to balance a carpet-sweeper on his chin, I said, "Why do you work like that at the A♭ Major?"

"Because, my son," he said, hanging the carpet-sweeper on a standard rose-bush for the household to find, "the A♭ Major Polonaise is the greatest thing of its sort ever written for the piano, just as the piano is the greatest instrument for which a man may write. When all the quarter odd million words in your wonderful English language are meaningless and useless to some poor, forlorn beggar, the A♭ Major can make him sit up and think he 's a man — which is the same thing as being one. With real men, with blood in 'em, like you and me, the A♭ Major can make us sit up and think we 're gods. There 's nothing else can do that. That Weber's 'Perpetual Motion' makes you remember you 're living, and that 's a good thing sometimes; and when that melody at long last comes parading up from the bass, you know, perhaps, how heart-free the men will feel when they sing in heaven. The 'Tannhäuser' March — it was n't written for the piano, but no matter — it 's very wonderful and stately and magnificent; and still you see it 's so human, full of repose and big songs, like a whole people on the move. Then the 'Don Juan' Fantaisie — it is wonderful; but there it ends. Whether you 're playing it or listening to it, you finish up in amazement; but your religion is n't helped a bit. When Liszt did it, he was a little girl trying to make a real live owl out of a peanut and a piece of brown

paper — trying to make a full orchestra and a brass-band out of a piano, and he succeeded pretty well. Then the sonatas are not all in one piece, and they 're conventional instead of logical. Some of those big concertos are fine things for big musicians, but there are only a few big musicians on earth, and they can play 'em for one another. For the rest of the people, their minds keep dropping away from a concerto at places where they should n't. But the A♭ Major Polonaise is unbroken, and it 's for the piano alone, and it 's just long enough to carry you — and the girl you love, if she is with you — up into high heaven, where you can look down together and see all your life, past and to come, and its connection with the rest of the beautiful world. It 's the triumph of individualism. There 's no longer any question of your value to the universe. The universe can't get along without you. The A♭ Major is the whole doctrine of human insistence and final triumph. It 's all your ambitions and all your love in all your life come true at once; and nothing in words can do that. And it 's for all mankind. Everybody can understand the A♭ Major,— when it is played,— and here 's the cruelty of it: it is hardly ever played. In all the world there are, besides me, who can play it, only two people I ever heard. That is a very great, but a very natural, misfortune, for it is a great sword that only a great man can handle. It is written *maestoso,*— majestic,— but who of the others play it so! They play it *allegro,*— anything,— and in the first two pages — yes, in the first ten bars — it rises up and overcomes them, and they are

no more seen. It has to play itself through. Perhaps fifty times in my life have I seen the A♭ Major Polonaise play itself through all alone, a few times fairly well, and many times very badly; but at the end the people cheered, and never knew — except two or three — that the man on the chair by the piano had nothing to do with it, but was overcome even before they were overcome. It needs a giant to lead it up, and, while he leads, to be so far above the work itself that he can dream all the time of the life of the whole world. When I play it, I have to use all the restraint there is in me,— and this is the hardest thing any man can do,— so that when I come back to the main theme for the last time people's very hearts within their breasts may turn to water with emotion. As I finished it once, I looked down, and close to me sat an old man, a general who is known to all the world and who knows no music, smiling gravely, and with the scalding tears of sheer joy running down his cheeks. 'My God, sir,' he said to me afterward, 'while you were playing that, I heard every gun I ever heard and saw every woman I ever loved.' That 's why I work like that at the A♭ Major, for there are some things in it that don't satisfy me yet. *Now* there are two men alive who play it as well as I do. In two months there will be no one — not even Chopin, if he were yet alive.

"Come out of this, and I 'll walk you round the middle division; and then if you 've got a dry stitch on you, I 'll walk you round again."

I have reason to suspect he lived in several atmospheres, but of them all this was the most exalted, and in it I have seen him do wonderful things, one or two of which I hope I may tell you about later. Some of the other atmospheres were very different, as you will doubtless see. In the meantime it was the same A♭ Major Polonaise, or rather the inevitable reaction from the A♭ Major Polonaise, that led us into various complications. Such is the power of music, even on the rebound.

On the morning of the second day following, the sun came up cleanly out of the Gulf of St. Lawrence into a sky like blued silver; so that as it rose higher, the whole country-side glared as it can only in the autumn. By noon that sky was an even, dead white, and the sun himself was silvering down until, by three o'clock, very fine cirrus clouds, very far away behind the veil, were moving slowly across his face, and the cold, faint shadows of bare branches on the fallen leaves would die out for a time and come up again, only to die out for longer, until at last they returned no more. Instead, came a soft breath of wind out of the southeast, and by five o'clock it was raining.

The pianist evidently deemed it a fitting afternoon on which to labor, and he labored tremendously. Toward the last he fell on a portion of the A♭ Major Polonaise which ye know, at least by reputation. That morning he said, "I am not satisfied with the evenness of the *crescendo.*"

It is a left-hand accompaniment to a clanging melody, and it consists of only this:

played thirty-five times at the rate — to be mathematical — of, say, 140 times to the minute; or you strike those octaves at the rate of 560 in a minute, till your left hand is a blur, like the dancing crank-rod of a little boy's steam-engine. It begins *pianissimo,* very soft, and proceeds *poco a poco crescendo,* increasing little by little, until it becomes *fortissimo,* very loud. Then you continue something similar very loud for ten times, and all this while that melody in the right hand is booming through it; and then immediately you do it all over again, including the something similar very loud ten times again at the finish. Taken altogether, it is very impressive. It is something like being out at nine o'clock on the night of full moon and seeing for the first time the tidal bore of the Bay of Fundy come up the Petitcodiac. All this description is not as musical as it might be, but it will serve to show that there are difficulties in this passage. The truth of the matter is that to do it properly requires a left wrist and forearm like tempered steel, with the will of Napoleon Bonaparte and the self-control of the Foreign Office.

This is all important, for it shows why the pianist was so much affected by it that he felt he needed a change.

At half-past five o'clock symptoms of serious unrest began to develop. He had played it through from a murmur to a roar many times when, without warning, he rose up, seized me by the coat, and undertook to stuff me up the chimney. I threatened violence.

"Well, then," he said, "what do you propose doing to keep me 'mused? Did n't you hear it? Does it seep into your indurated cerebrum that unless y'r guest gets some new form of cooling excitement, the fly-wheel of his world-impresser will explode and triturate his untamed virtue?" I said it seeped, and, after some talking, directed at finding out what he really wanted, ended by promising to do what I could.

He went to his room with a book, and I, clad in a large Burberry against the rain that was now sifting steadily on the windows, went down the hill, ostensibly to get the mail, but really to have the *Rorqual's* crew ready to go out on a shooting-trip at dawn, independent of all weather.

It was exceedingly dark. The rain was yet southeast, and on the wharf it slanted lightly in my face, and I could hear the water clucking mysteriously among the crib-logs and the short slap of the chops against the *Rorqual's* bow when that ship was invisible in the gloom ahead. Then a blackish figure, presenting the generous outlines of oilskins and a sou'wester, moved out from behind a pile of laths.

"Where might you be goin'?" it said.

"Hello, Henry, is that you?"— It was Mr. Simpson —"Where were *you* going?"

"Aboard the *Rorqual* huntin' for you; but I can see it would n't have been any use." This seemed evident. There was a reticent pause.

"What was it especially?" I said. The pause continued.

Then:

"I 'm comin' to think I 've degenerated," he began sadly. "My morals don't seem to be what they used to be. You remember about a year ago how constitutionally opposed you an' me was to nettin' salmon? We could tolerate spearin' enough to look on without takin' any active part,"— I recalled Mr. Simpson bearing a twelve-foot salmon-spear and dancing in a freezing river through the greater part of one joyful night,—"but the bare idea of nettin' sort of struck us here,"— he laid his hand on his iron-buttoned bib,—"and made us feel sickish. We said we could understand an' sympathize with spearin', but we could n't see any sport in nettin', and, besides, it was unfair to the country an' to everybody. Well, I 'm goin' up river to-night with Humphrey Kidderson an' a bag of bricks an' a net a hundred an' twenty feet long an' sixteen feet deep: an' I was thinkin' that perhaps you might like to come." Here he held up an open hand as if to block an interruption I had no thought of making, and continued rapidly: "*As* a spectator, of course. I could n't think of you as touchin' a salmon-net with those lily hands when it 's against the law of this great country, *but* as a spectator. Y' see, if y'r oatmeal-fed conscience is liable to get a cramp, y' can clinch y'r fists an' shut both eyes an' keep thinkin' that

if the salmon get caught at all, they 'd get caught anyway whether you was present or not, an' that 'll keep y' from breakin' down and weepin' in the boat." Here Mr. Simpson retired partly behind the laths again, where I could see his face in ghostly shadow, and paused for developments. I had been thinking rapidly, but not along these lines. In times of great stress it seems always that the gods prepare a way.

"Henry," I said, "could you take also a pianist?"

"What is that?" he inquired, startled out from behind his barricade again.

"A man that plays the piano."

"Oh, is that all. Never heard 'em called by that name. I thought it was a sort of female fortune-teller. Yes, we can take him; but I don't think he 'd like it. I 've only seen two or three, an' I never been really close to one. But to me they looked delicate an' seemed to flush up awful easy round the gills. If it turns cold, as it 's likely to before morning, he 'd freeze to death; besides the chance of comin' in personal contac' with wardens an' havin' to exhaust the beggars by strategy through three paralyzin' hours, crawlin' through wet brush on your soakin' tummy with the net on the back of y'r neck at half-past two in the morning, while some one in the boat is explainin' to the wardens that they had no idea there was salmon in the Black River in the fall, an' that personally — scrapin' the ice off the oar with their mitt — they was just out for a row an' happened up here as they would anywhere else, an' the bricks was for ballast in case of a typhoon comin' up, an' bricks was n't

evidence, anyway. No, I don't think he 'd enjoy it, besides bein' a nuisance."

"Henry," I said, "this time you 're mistaken. There are as many different kinds of pianists as there are other people, but they all suffer from what is called temperament. It 's a high-pressure development of the nervous system, and they have to be very strong to stand it. The great majority of them are n't strong enough. That 's the kind you 've seen, and that 's the reason there are so few great pianists in the world. I suppose there are only about half a dozen or so on earth. This one is smaller than you are, but he could dance you like a baby on his knee whether you wanted to be danced or not." Mr. Simpson spat.

"My, how ferocious!" he interjected. "D' y' think he 's likely to?"

"No, I don't," I said; "but it 's probable he 'll do something outrageous. You never can tell what he is going to do next. The only weapon he carries is a pair of nickel-plated wire-pliers in his hip pocket. Why, I don't know, except that he used to be a sort of electrician also. His present work is very wearing, and this evening he has been begging and praying me to find him some new and interesting excitement. Between you and me, if we were so unfortunate as to run into the wardens, I think all we should have to do would be to turn him loose in the woods, and drop back to the opposite side of the river, and he 'd hang the lot of them."

"Well, he sounds pretty good," Mr. Simpson commented, "an' I don't much mind what he does so long

as he don't complain that his hands is cold. If he can help the excitement, so much the better. I think that 's what we go for more than salmon. You can fetch him along. And look: better bring along some blankets an' sleeping-bags. If everything 's quiet, we can have a sleep for a while when the net is down. This rain is goin' to let up before morning. I 'll go an' tell Humphrey. He was feelin' pretty good the other night, an' walked out the front door o' my shop an' cracked two ribs,— did n't notice he was on the second floor,— so he won't be able to do as much work to-night as he might. I s'pose we had better take the *Porpoise* up as far as we can, an' row the rest of the way?" The *Porpoise* was the *Rorqual's* really silent motor-tender.

"Henry!" I said sternly.

"No, 'pon my soul," he said; "I only wanted you — an' I 'll see you, say in an hour."

We went up the wharf together until he turned into a dark alleyway, splashing through some unseen pool of water, and disappeared. I went on up the hill, running. The pianist I found still in his room, reading and scowling. I had nicely closed the door when the book came fluttering at my head. I stopped it with both hands, ball-fashion, a foot in front of my mouth and somewhat mashed.

"'*Her hand fell like a curled pink rose-petal, in her lap!*' Grrr-r-r! What did y' leave me alone with that for?" he roared.

"I did n't know what you had,— some one must have left it here,— but now listen —" and I unfolded the

glittering prospect. First he insisted on waltzing round the room; then he turned to clothing himself under direction, partly his own things, but chiefly mine, which were much too large: rubber boots, a second pair of trousers turned up four inches, a crimson sweater that reached to his knees, a coat freely splashed with copper paint, and later, over everything, an oilskin suit, of which the overalls sat like the bellows of a concertina and rasped together when he walked.

"Why all this gear?" he inquired, fighting to get the eternal wire-pliers into the nearest hip pocket.

"Later," I said, "if you happen to be trying to go to sleep in a squashy marsh, lying chiefly in water and white frost, with nothing over you but the river steam, you 'll find out. What might you be going to do with the wire-pliers?"

"They always come in useful at the critical moment and save everybody's life. Never saw it fail yet; you wait and see. Now tell me something more about this salmon business."

I started to say that this was the time in the autumn when the run of big male salmon began to go up,— first the females, then the small males, then the big males till the ice made, and after,— and we might get them over forty pounds in weight —

"And the wardens?" he interrupted.

"The wardens," I said, "are paid by the Provincial Government, ten dollars for each seventy-hours' service on the river, to keep poachers off — us to-night. Every family in the Black River country is brought up to the

belief that it owns every salmon that comes into the Black River at any time of year. This is a profound secret known to everybody in the county, most especially the wardens, who are local men and don't wish to hurt anybody's feelings; but they feel that they require the ten dollars. Then there are the head wardens. The department calls them chief overseers. They come from other parts of the country; so, as they don't have to live among the Black Riverites, and are better paid; they are very stern." The pianist pondered throughout the time it took me to get into a pair of waterproof boots and a suit of gaberdine impenetrable to all conditions of weather. Then he said:

"D' y' know, I believe I 'd rather catch a chief overseer than I would a salmon! Do y' suppose there would be any way?"

"I don't know," I said; "but I imagine not." He lapsed into thought.

"Anyway," he said finally, "I bet you I 'll be stage-managing this expedition before we get home. You watch." For a start in the direction of an interesting trip this seemed hopeful. When I left him, to have a portable supper for five men prepared, he had turned out part of the contents of one large trunk, and was thoughtfully searching through what to me seemed to be a remarkable collection of rubbish. He came downstairs bearing the wreck of a small, black leather bag, which he asked if he might take, explaining that he might get wet, and it contained a few dry clothes. I remember thinking of that bag only as a foolish and in-

significant thing. Later it was to grow in my esteem.

In fifteen minutes, still blinded by the last of the street lights, we were groping our way to the edge of the wharf, carrying the bag, the supper, and two quart thermostatic bottles full of hot tea. Within hand-reach of the *Rorqual's* gaunt awning-stanchions, long stripped of their awnings in deference to October gales, we stopped, and a towering, black figure arose painfully from a sitting position on one of the boat-chocks and groaned. Another figure was briskly removing the cover from the *Porpoise,* as evidenced by the sound of rubbing wet canvas, and still a third, very indistinct, seemed to be operating about the *Porpoise's* stern. Here was the night-covered expedition in full activity. A voice came from the last figure.

"Humphrey's ribs is awful bad to-night, but he says he 's goin', if it kills him." This was Mr. Simpson. "If Adam could spare one, surely, Lord, he 's long enough to do without a couple — ain't ye, Hump?" From Mr. Kidderson we gathered that if he had been Adam, this vale of tears would never have been brightened by the presence of woman.

"Henry," I said, "this is Mr. Kimborough." They acknowledged each other deferentially. When we had climbed on deck, and Mr. Kidderson, between groans, was conversing with the pianist, Mr. Simpson worked around to a position near my right ear.

"Y' don't mean t' tell me," he whispered, "that the fat mariner is y'r friend with the high-pressure nervous system an' the wire-pliers!" I nodded.

"All I can say," he commented, "is that he don't look it. He ain't the breed I was thinkin' about at all. To me he 'd look more natural eatin' pork and beans in a lobster factory." Then aloud, pointing to the figure that was now methodically rolling the boat-cover: "We have also our old friend Mr. Charles Anderson, who can navigate a flat, blindfolded, through hell in a thunder-squall, as you know, an' whose specialty is swimmin' in a mackintosh and rubber boots." This was a reference to an event of a year before, and, seeing Mr. Anderson move, I undertook to change the subject.

"Netting salmon!" I said, affecting pained surprise.

"*As* a spectator only — like you!" said Mr. Simpson, with blistering sarcasm.

All together we swung the *Porpoise* outboard and lowered away until up out of the obscurity came a ponderous splash and the falls hung loose in our hands. After her we lowered the *Rorqual's* thirteen-foot dinghy, which was to carry us during the later operations. For evident reasons we worked without lights, with the exception of one lantern, invisible in the *Rorqual's* lazarette. Up the companionway, over the side, and into the dinghy were swiftly passed and stowed out of the wet one single and two double sleeping-bags and one pair of white, Hudson's Bay Company's four-point blankets, uncut — a third of an inch of matted wool sixteen feet long by eight feet wide. (A full-grown Indian lives in one of these and a pair of moccasins and nothing else throughout a Northwest winter.) Because of long experience, we

made all provisions for comfort. Then from the wharf's edge Mr. Anderson bore two late oat-bags, one giving forth the metallic, grating sound characteristic of bricks, which, as sinkers, are more desirable than rocks, and the other being soft and uneven to the touch, and said to contain the net. These were reverently placed. Last came the supper and the thermostatic bottles, Mr. Simpson evincing immediate concern for their safety. Throughout these activities the pianist, otherwise Mr. Kimborough, had watched with growing interest; but when I took out a pocket electric flash-lamp and swung it about on one final tour of inspection, he sprang to attention.

"Freddy wants lightning-bug," he said, and annexed it for the rest of the night. He had a new toy.

Mr. Kidderson, who had been content to hang on the *Rorqual's* rail and drip in silence, except for a groan that seemed to work itself every thirty seconds, like an automatic, compressed-air, diaphone fog-signal, now came to the decision that under a light tarpaulin, on the soft sleeping-bags, in the midst of the dinghy, was the place for him, and he lowered himself with curses, and composed his limbs for slumber. Mr. Anderson, rocking precariously on the *Porpoise's* stern, made fast the dinghy's painter, and everybody paused for five seconds.

"All ready?" inquired the pianist, suavely. I nodded.

There was a flash of light, and a bang that deafened my ears, smote my chest, thrilled the deck under our

feet, and echoed back with a crash from the town, where without doubt it shook every window. I was facing Mr. Simpson, and saw him jump clear of the deck. He was of a nervous disposition.

"What the bl—" he began.

"I told you," I remarked, "that you could never tell what he was going to do next. How did ye do it?" I said severely, turning to the pianist.

"This way," said that person, flashing the electric lamp on half a ball of marlin, of which the end led into the far darkness forward. "Here, pull!" he said in a burst of explanation to Mr. Simpson. Mr. Simpson pulled. Another crash tore the air. Mr. Simpson danced again.

"Blast your shriveled soul!" he trembled (or words to that effect). "What did y' do that for?"

"I did n't do it: you did it yourself," wept the pianist, rocking on the rail in his glee. The *Rorqual* had a one-pounder repeating signal-gun of which we were very proud. While the others were bringing up sleeping-bags, he had been bringing up cartridges and marlin, though certainly we never saw him make his dispositions.

"Two guns having been fired, the mail will now sail," he said. "All aboard! The populace is about to arrive." By the time I had turned over the engine, and the dinghy, with Mr. Kidderson's startled head still above the tarpaulin, had swung into line on the *Porpoise's* wake, I looked up to see several figures in inquiring attitudes on the wharf's edge, silhouetted against

the town lights. We left them to their questions, and fared out into the steaming blackness of the rain-hidden harbor.

Mr. Anderson quite naturally took the wheel.

"You steer?" he inquired. I indicated that my sphere lay in the open gulf outside Leith Head Light, wherever that might be at the present moment, our only view being the stiff tow-rope and the foam playing about the bow of Mr. Kidderson's car, very faint astern. So he bent to his work.

Then it rained, and it blew.

We forgot that it had been raining before. We heard it roar in the woods on Granton Head five minutes before it reached us. When it arrived, it blotted out the eternal sea. Earth and sky had disappeared long since. Blinded and half-choked, I put my hand on the vibrating tow-rope, and from this and the sound of wild splashing astern I inferred that Mr. Kidderson was still coming. We heard the swish and occasionally saw the snowy flash of the tops of short harbor seas, and sometimes as the *Porpoise,* running full in their trough, rolled down to her coaming, their crests lifted and blew in so that the exhaust-piping hissed louder, and the pianist and Mr. Simpson seated themselves on the floor boards with arms locked for better protection. Through the noise of the wind and the sea and the laboring engine I heard Mr. Simpson complain that it was raining under his left arm and he was not quite sure how it was getting in, though he thought there was a draft up his trousers leg. The subject changed smoothly to colds

and their treatment. I could not catch Mr. Kimborough's method, but Mr. Simpson stated that when he had a cold, he hung his hat on the foot of the bed, left the light burning, and went to bed with a bottle of whisky. When he could see two hats every time he looked, he considered the cold cured and went to sleep. Then back from colds to wet feet, and from wet feet to fire departments, while we threshed up mid-harbor in a fully developed tempest, followed a tale by the pianist of how he had assisted at the celebration of the wedding of a neighbor who was an unfriend of his. I gathered that this happened in the West, and that while everything was in full progress in the house, he found his way to a small but important outhouse with four copies of the Winnipeg *Telegram,* a bottle of kerosene, and a match. The celebration was a jubilant success. Mr. Simpson, clinging to Mr. Kimborough and the seat, addressed himself to me:

"Y'r friend has got a stupendous mind," he said. "His last reminds me of just before Billy Clink an' me dissolved partnership in the carriage business an' I become pure blacksmith.

"Our shop was in the old Jamieson building, and John McKeever an' his wife lived overhead. When they was sober, their only ambition was to get rid of us, an' when they was drunk, the same, only more so. The old woman could n't bear the smell of paint, an', anyway, she said they owned the whole building by *habendum,* whatever that might be, because she 'd lived there for twenty-six years without payin' any rent. I told

her, if that was the only qualification, she owned the whole town.

"War was declared one Saturday night when she got John to come down an' board up our door an' windows while she held the nails. Every Sunday mornin' regular old Billy used to go down to see that the tide was comin' in all right, an' this mornin' he seen the damage. John an' his wife was away at church, so he borrowed a hatchet and wire nails, an' took off them boards, an' used 'em for boardin' up their front an' back doors so they could n't get in, an' boarded 'em proper, too. Then Billy went home to dinner. That was all we heard for a while.

"By-an'-by October come along, an' one morning Billy saunters in an' says: 'Well, I s'pose we need a fire.'

"'I s'pose so,' I says; 'but what 's the matter with that elbow?'"— Mr. Simpson pointed toward an imaginary ceiling in the rocking and water-swept sky — "Of course our stovepipe went up through the McKeevers' drawing-room, an' Mrs. McKeever, with a woman's nasty but inconsequent mind, had unshipped the pipe at the elbow so we could n't have a fire. Or we thought we could n't for about forty-five seconds. I s'pose old Billy was as painstaking an' pig-headed as anything ever born in Nova Scotia of Scotch parents, an' the trouble an' the time he took in collectin' titbits to put in that stove was awful to see. Rags an' boiled oil, an' an old pair of rubber boots, an' a pretty good pair of leather boots, with three pairs of my socks an' some varnish, an'

several other things I don't remember. On top of the lot he put in a crane — All right, then, great blue heron — that I stuffed with oakum, which he said never looked natural, an' now, to the well-known properties of oakum would add the odor of cremated feathers. Is that better? When we lighted it we had some misgivin's as to whether the whole mixture would n't explode: but it burned perfectly natural. Up-stairs windows began to go up at once, an' water began to come down through the pipe-hole; but it ran out through the elbow, an' did n't hurt the fire. Then they stuffed up the hole, but Billy built a slow fire of rags,— havin' faith that the smoke might percolate,— an' we closed up shop for the day, an' went smelt-fishin'. Billy only went back once to take in part of an old hair mattress he found an' some glue he said we could spare.

" The next day the stovepipe was back all right.

" Then things went very nice for about two weeks till a cold snap come along, an' the old woman, backed by the old man, thought she 'd have another try. I noticed in the morning the pipe was gone, but the hole was n't stuffed, which struck me as sort of curious, considerin' the amount of experience she 'd accumulated. Then one of the boys from the laundry sauntered in to say that about 6 A. M. he 'd seen John luggin' two empty kerosene casks up-stairs, an' that for an hour an' a half steady afterward he 'd been carryin' up water in buckets.

" ' So that 's his stupendous plan, is it? ' I says to myself. ' See here, Henry, the time is now ripe for you to add y'r personal councils to these manœuvers.'

So I lowered the elbow a little so that no amount of water in it could get to the stove, an' in that elbow I put, I s'pose, seven pounds of good-sized lumps of calcium carbide — belongin' to *this* boat's search-light an' borrowed from the engineer of the *Rorqual.*" This last to me. "All it needed was frequent rains to make thirty-six cubic feet of pure acetylene gas, which, measured by stink alone, is an awful lot, to say nothin' of the chance of its gettin' afire an' liftin' the roof off. Then I went away with the firm's book an' the foldin'-slate.

"About four o'clock I seen Billy goin' down, so I made it convenient to go down, too. It took him about six seconds to see that stovepipe was off an' the hole open. He winked at me just once, an' started collectin' stuff for a fire, an' I winked back. I forgot to mention the carbide an' the two casks of water. All the time Billy was collectin' choice morsels I could hear quiet but determined footsteps paradin' about up-stairs. When he lit the match I got as near the door as I could without it bein' noticeable, and about half a minute afterward there began what you might call a mutual surprise all round. That stovepipe hole commenced to run an eight-inch stream of water, but over the noise it made you could hear a noise like a tea-kettle boiling over on a hot stove, an' then instantaneously from up-stairs come some gaspin' an' a little swearin' an' the water stopped. By this time, though I was standin' in the draft of the door, the gas had me by the windpipe an' Billy was smotherin' inside, an' the stove was beginnin' to burn up bright an' interestin'.

"'What is it?' he says, chokin'.

"'Some chemical you 've made by your mixture,' I says. 'Y' can't cook overboots an' turpentine together for nothin'.'

"'It 'll kill the beggars,' he says.

"I says, 'All the better.'

"'It smells to me like acetylene,' he says.

"Just then there was a puff an' a belch from that elbow, an' a quiet sort of bluish-yellow sheet of flame spread over the ceiling and run about half-way down the walls — quite slow: I suppose it was half a second before it was all over. We was sort of startled for a minute, an' when we looked again, everything had settled down an' there was a pillar of fire, yellow an' white, sizzlin' up through the pipe-hole, an' up-stairs all they needed was the fiddle t' make y' think they was about the middle of the last figure of a set of quadrilles.

"'Now you 've done it!' I says, an' started on the gallop for the engine-house. Simmy told me that when he got there with the hand chemical, John and Mrs. McKeever was dancin' round what from his readin' he judged was a natural-gas well, with a flame about eight feet high, an' throwin' water at each other with buckets an' cryin' with excitement. He said the more water they threw, the better it seemed to burn, and it needed the chemical to do it any good.

"That night the stovepipe went in for the rest of the winter."

The pianist had listened with many chuckles: he and Mr. Simpson were getting along beautifully.

"Now, would you look at Charley Anderson an' get a liberal education in the art of navigatin' by nothin' whatever!" the latter said. Mr. Anderson was standing high, balancing easily, and we might have been in the next county for all the attention we got.

"He may be listenin' an' he may be smellin', but he certainly ain't seein'; because there 's nothin' to see except that the darkness is a little darker on the side away from the town lights, an' he 's lookin' ahead. Note his long an' prehensile nose rootin' round in the fog. *Now* he 's got it: look — please look at him spinnin' the wheel! Would n't you actually think he knew where he was goin'!" Mr. Anderson had crouched down in the *Porpoise's* pounding bow, and was steering as precisely as if he were coming into a dock, while we could see, as Mr. Simpson said, nothing whatever. The pianist broke into the pause. The Foremouth blacksmith had evidently been troubling his brain.

"I wonder," he murmured, "where in the green fields of English he culled that marguerite about 'a woman's nasty but inconsequent mind.'" Before I had a chance to offer my theory as to the wonderful way the Nova Scotia School System can teach all English literature without the use of the English language, he looked ahead in amazement and said, "Hello, we are now entering a forest!" Straight trunks of mighty trees suddenly stood up around us, with a suggestion of laced branches far overhead. We were disillusioned by the sound of seas swashing heavily among piles and the glare of a rain-blurred red light high above us.

"Railway bridge," said Mr. Simpson, and in the next twenty seconds it had dissolved in the air behind, and we were plowing into the trackless lower basin of the Black River, which is a place of intricate channels. The navigator could run now only by dead reckoning, and for the most part stood facing us, borne backward through the night, with his eyes — we could see them — fixed critically on the faint, low mantle of light from the Leith arcs that lay on the lost horizon astern and lent the illusion of an aura overhanging the funeral bark of some saint being carried through unblemished space into the regions beyond — the recumbent Mr. Kidderson in the oncoming dinghy. Then, as Mr. Anderson worked the wheel, the aura departed from the saint and slid around until it hung for two minutes off our starboard beam, whence it slowly retraced till it hovered, faint as the first blush of dawn, over the port quarter.

"About here we turn sharp to the right," said Mr. Anderson, as though speaking to himself.

"*Here* meanin' the middle of the night," Mr. Simpson explained. To the right we forthwith turned for the space of forty-five seconds, at the end of which time something thumped the bluff of the *Porpoise's* bow and slid aft, rasping along the port rubbing strake. Except Mr. Anderson, everybody started. It was a small tree standing amid swirling waters, with its top lost in the darkness.

"Channel bush," he said. "Look and see if there 's an old collar of Henry's tied to it. It 'll be a little wilted by now."

"W. G. & R., *Tamarac,* 17½," added Mr. Simpson.

I caught sight of a fluttering white rag, and said so.

"All right," said Mr. Anderson; "that 's my mark: it means McCord's Point. Now we 're off," and the *Porpoise* whirled round and slapped the seas again.

"Wah! that 's a miracle!" said the pianist in his admiration.

"Miracle nothin'!" replied Mr. Simpson scornfully; "but he *can* do miracles. *That* ain't good sleight-of-hand. Wait till the Lord is nice enough to let you see him navigatin' this basin at 2 A. M., an' low tide, with a rowboat drawin' three inches more water than there is on the flats: then you can talk about miracles. No heaven an' no earth an' no sea an' no sky, an' two miles of water around y', as y' know from the country atlas an' former experience, an' five inches of water underneath y', which y' know by feelin' it; besides some eel-grass an' thirteen feet of mud; an' then: 'Henry, stick y'r oar out there an' see if y' can feel a log with two knots on it — ye-es: here we turn to the left.' Then: 'Now we 're about due to strike a hump. That 's funny'— and then all of a sudden you 're hung up by the middle on something, an' can't feel any bottom round y' at all. From there you buck yourself off backward, 'Not too fast,' until y' get y'r wonderful bearin's by Isaac McLellan's dog barkin', an' have to fire the Mauser pistol every seven minutes to keep him barkin', which we did, an' took our bearin's off that dog alone for the next half mile round the Marcil mussel-bed an' never started a rivet. Talk about y'r submarine bells! An'

then, when we 'd got the whole countryside pretty freely stirred up, Charley knew the note an' period of every dog, like whistlin' buoys, an' picked out two on adjacent farms an' used 'em for range-lights all down the Grist Mill Channel. He said he was trustin' to McCord's dog barkin' on the roof of the root cellar, an' if he dragged his moorin's an' got down in the back field, we was lost.

" That 's the time to see miracles," Mr. Simpson concluded. " Would y' be good enough t' look at him now! " The pianist gazed in awe. Mr. Anderson was again steering with precision by something ahead that we failed to make out, as we continued to do for the next fifteen minutes, through all of which time the wind lessened and the rain fell on the sea with a crisp roar like the feed of a steam thresher, and harmlessly cloaked the outsides of our persons in running water.

At the end of that quarter hour the helmsman once more wavered in the midst of space, turned the *Porpoise's* head first gradually to the right, then thoughtfully to the left, and appeared to seek some unguessable landmark.

" What is it now? " respectfully breathed the pianist. Mr. Simpson sadly shook his head, indicating that the problem was beyond him, and in the same instant came a blast of large and unmistakable squawks and a ponderous swishing sound from a district a little to starboard and perhaps thirty feet over our heads. I saw Mr. Kimborough jerk himself around to face this new peril.

" That 's those two cranes that roost on the dolphin off

the old gravel pit," Mr. Anderson explained, his voice cleared of all trouble; and added confidentially, pointing, "There 's the spit by the Duck Pond, an' that 's Ice House Point."

"You don't say so!" replied Mr. Simpson, as we followed the wave of the arm, and saw perhaps a blacker blackness in the dark. "Stella'ton! All change!" I stopped the engine, and we slipped the *Porpoise's* little anchor overboard, guarding against the rattling of chain, which carries so far over water.

Silently we drew the dinghy alongside, and silently we drew Mr. Kidderson from beneath the tarpaulin, and, to use Mr. Simpson's words, "coiled him away in the bow," without raising any protest. Mr. Anderson was already aboard, stuffing the rowlocks with waste for the sake of silence, and we climbed in and pushed off. In six strokes the *Porpoise* was gone, and in six more we were rowing beneath a low bank.

All of that mysteriously guided trip up-river is worth telling, but exigencies forbid. The wind had gone. The rain was as steady as the rustling of aspens in August. Every shadowy point had its significance. The two pairs of soft oars paused twenty minutes in a bubbling, pattering silence before an arched and mighty shadow said to be the Glenfairley Bridge, then came to the conclusion that a certain portentous disturbance had been a clod washed down from the bank, and softly passed through. Then, beyond a known pine-tree that stood above the spruces like a towering ghost, we were moving up on the right of a low island, and Mr. Simp-

son, in an endeavor to satisfy a request of Mr. Kimborough's, was giving, in a blood-curdling whisper, a description of head wardens and their awful functions, when the dinghy, apparently acting on a sudden thought of her own, paused, stopped, and started briskly downriver again, backward. I faintly saw the pianist turn a bewildered face to the weeping skies, as though to seek the cause of this new wonder there, for, to the novice, the phenomenon is startling, especially under the strain of the surroundings. To the matured mind it presents itself as the natural course of events when you run into the elastic, double backrope of a salmon net stretched tight from river-bank to river-bank. Mr. Kidderson suddenly came to life and sat up.

"Let 's have an oar," he said, "till I shove it down. There! Now pull like women. *Cooeeoo,*" he whistled softly, as the backrope scrubbed along under the dinghy's keel, and the pianist gazed overboard to find it invisible in the black water. The woods on the right remained silent.

"All right," he said aloud, "don't answer then, ye whisky-bleared outlaws." At this stage we saw a faint red glow as from a pipe being smoked upside down, and somebody chuckled. Followed a deliberate voice out of the night:

"'S that you, Hump? *We* heard you had two ribs broke, an' thought we were bein' had."

"They got the pieces out of his heart an' lungs so he could come," interpolated Mr. Simpson, and two voices out of the night laughed.

"What luck?" Mr. Kidderson resumed.

"We 're just set," drawled the reply, "and the tide 's runnin' down yet." Then, after a pause, the words fell like strokes of a gong:

"They got a telephone message at the Glenfairley post-office to say that old Corbin left Churchville by the Black River road at five o'clock, so I s'pose he 's comin' here, an' we may have to lift before we can do any good. He 's not been on this river for a couple of weeks; but he can't get a boat, anyway."

"Oh," said Mr. Kidderson, in a tone which indicated it was a matter apart from his interests in life, "then you 'd better stand by your nets. We must be moving. Good-night."

"Good-night." In that moment the command passed over from Mr. Anderson to Mr. Kidderson, for we were now among farms and wood-lots on which the latter had spent his golden youth and speared and netted salmon every autumn since, and he knew them by the sense of touch.

"Those were the Stewart boys," he informed softly.

"And who 's old Corbin?" inquired the pianist. I had jabbed him in the back at the sound of that name. Mr. Simpson took up the task of instruction.

"Old Corbin," he said, "is Joseph Howe Corbin, Chief Overseer, Superintendent, and Inspector of Fisheries and Lord High Chief Head Warden for this section of Nova Scotia in the Dominion of Canada, an' as bilious an' pin-headed an old sculpin as ever cried in a prayer meetin'. His disease is bein' suspicious. Why, one

mornin' about 1 A. M. we had what you might call a conversation, an' he would n't believe *me*. We was on opposite sides of the river, with no way for him to come across, so of course he could n't see my frank an' open countenance. That might have made a difference. He said I was a liar," said Mr. Simpson in a hurt tone. "An' besides, he 's got no sense of humor. He can't see any fun in this business, like us. He was n't born with any sportin' instincts, wantin' to play the game. He 's so dead in earnest he don't know whether the little stars in heaven is twinklin' or not. He don't spoil the fishin', but he spoils the restfulness of it, an' keeps ye jumpy an' nervous. He had n't ought to be allowed. He 's in the business for the love of it, an' half of 'em are scared of him. An' he 's no fool, an' he 's scared of nothin'."

"Nothing?" said Mr. Kimborough.

"So far as I know."

"And will he come where we are going to-night?"

"He 'll come there if he comes any place on this river," said Mr. Kidderson, wearily.

"Glory be!" I heard the pianist murmur in rapture. "I did n't deserve this." Then, more softly, "And the Lord have mercy upon his soul!"

"What are you rumbling about?" asked Mr. Simpson. "Are you scared?"

"Not yet," Mr. Kimborough whispered, and I could feel him trembling.

Here, where the river ran narrow and deep, and the dinghy, with her muffled oars, moved without so much sound as could be heard among the lessening raindrops,

we ran into the boom of low voices in conversation, and immediately checked and dropped back into more utter darkness, where we put Mr. Anderson ashore with the net and two spears while we reconnoitered. At the end of another net, on an intervale island, two men sat under an overturned flat and talked politics — we caught the name of George Murray. We advertised the oncoming of Mr. Joseph Howe Corbin, which was news, recovered Mr. Anderson, and proceeded up-river, the backrope being courteously lowered for our passage. So at last we attained to our pool, which, we learned, was appropriately called the Mill Set.

Then came out the characteristics of Humphrey Kidderson. He rose up in his strength and he forgot about his ribs. The old Black River spirit dominated. He cared not for all the wardens, head or otherwise, in all the green earth, so he did n't. He pulled off two coats in the face of the dying rain, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and worked in his hairy bare arms. He talked loud and free, and banged the oars and the spears about in the boat until it sent shivers up and down the spinal marrow and sympathetic ganglia of Henry Simpson, as Mr. Simpson admitted, to say nothing of me. He said we need n't be so mighty nervous, as, if old Corbin *was* mushrat enough to come out in the rain-storm past, he certainly would n't bother coming down to look for nets until the tide started on the rise. He announced that Mr. Simpson could hop out on the east bank of the river and make fast one end of the backrope round a big boulder he would find at the bottom of a sheer forty-foot

bank, down which everybody could easily come by falling, and in no other way. I, in my turn, could row like — various things he particularized while I was rowing, keeping her head up-stream while he paid out the net; but "Row, ye son-of-a-gun, row!" he stormed, while I wiped the pool into foam and eventually succeeded in straightening out the current-sagged net till at last we attained near enough to the west bank for Mr. Anderson to claw his way ashore on the low point, like a man in a tug-of-war, and, fighting for every inch of his ground, get a turn of the straining backrope around a marvelously convenient fence-post.

"Now give her a couple o' yanks!" he said, and we yanked, though I heard him groan once as the ribs caught him again. "Fine!" he commented at last, as the backrope swept away in a beautiful taut curve into the invisibility where dwelt Mr. Simpson. "Now for the bricks." Back into the dinghy we clambered again, and I heard the bricks grate as Mr. Anderson untied the bag. Then along the backrope we hauled ourselves, with the boat on its up-stream side and held against it by the current, so that when the bottom-rope was weighted and dropped, it might rest on the bottom of the river directly below the backrope, and the net between might belly out with the current. "The fish always mash in the upper curve," said Mr. Kidderson. And though it is altogether aside from the real interest of this tale, I have no keener recollection than that of seeing Humphrey Kidderson, wholly lost in enthusiasm, with his left hand, shadowy, palm up, and open-fingered to receive it, reach

over the backrope with his right to where the sixteen-foot net lay out almost flat on the current, and jerk it in with the smooth, swift, rhythmic jerk of the netter of forty-two years' practice, the light twine wisping through the water till the bottom-rope came up, the marlin snood was found, and the brick slip-knotted in, to slide away again with the splashless drop of the expert. So the boat moved on, past the next float, and the wisping net came in again; till ten new bricks, stolen shamelessly from a growing structure in Leith, lay in a curved line across the dark bed of the Black River.

"All finished," said Mr. Kidderson, as the last brick went out over the quarter, and the dinghy surged in the dark with Mr. Simpson climbing in over her bow. "Now we 'll go up to Malcolm McLeod's and talk to them for a while. They 're very nice people." It was the same Malcolm McLeod's where we had sheltered the woolly horse a year before.

"An' leave the net?" asked Mr. Simpson.

"Of course. Who 's to bother it?" Such faith was inspiring. We would go. We went up past an upper intervale on our right, where there grazed shadowy cattle, still left out in this over-mild autumn weather, and on through two long reaches, until we had run clean out of the woods, and the river lay between low, treeless banks. In a patch of willow we made fast the dinghy and climbed out on an open intervale that edged into a field sloping up and away toward the Glenfairley road, beyond which one light shone like a star. As we crossed the road and ap-

proached the light, walking on the edge of a plowed field, the pianist leaped as leaps a young colt, and I could see that the mantle of leadership, which had slipped so naturally from Mr. Anderson to Mr. Kidderson, was about to change again.

"This *is* a wonderful country," he said. "Who 'd ever think, to look out the window in Leith at these innocent hills, that to get up here you 'd have to navigate by a 17½ collar and two whooping cranes!"

"Great blue herons," said Mr. Simpson, stiffly. A roar came from the farther side of a wood-pile we were approaching.

"Look out for the dog," warned Mr. Kidderson, ahead; "he 's part mastiff, and very nasty."

"Oh, he is, is he?" said the pianist, and advanced around the wood-pile as a man still-hunting a bull moose. The roar continued for a space, then settled down into a blood-congealing growl. We moved past the end of the wood-pile so that we might view the hunt. The dog and the pianist were approaching each other in a straight line and with great caution, and both were growling furiously. The pianist was crouched down and appeared to be holding something in front of him. At ten feet the dog paused, doubtless in amazement, and at eight feet, with the pianist still coming on, his nerve seemed to break. At the same instant a blinding glare of light struck him in the eyes, and he turned and fled with yelps of terror, for Mr. Kimborough had turned loose the electric flash-light. The dog clung to the house as his only hope, and round and round it

he went, with the pianist's oilskins rasping together on his trail, until we lay on the wood-pile in our weakness and moaned. There, after the dog had broken away and fled out through the next farm and the pianist had given up the chase, we were found by Mr. McLeod.

"I thought the horses had broke' out," said that person. "Where 's the dog gone?"

"Donno," stuttered Mr. Simpson; "I guess he 's dee-railed — jumped his orbit —" he made a highly descriptive tangential motion with his forefinger. "If he ever comes back, it 'll be as a comet — with its tail between its legs."

But Mr. McLeod was continuing in the same breath: "You up nettin'? Who do ye think is gettin' a quiet cup of tea in the kitchen? Old Corbin. And he 's got a young fellow from Churchville with him. You 'd better get those oilskins off in the shed before you come in."

To the appointed shed we retired, all together, running, and while the oilskins were being stripped, the pianist hugged me round the neck. Then, in the warm smell of manure, with his feet on a milking-stool and his head among cobwebs, he made a speech to this effect:

"Gentlemen, follow me, and you shall inherit the earth. This concert is about to begin. What the program is to be I can tell you least of all. Your only duty is to await developments and back the band for all you 're worth. No half-measures. Listen carefully, and take your cue from me every time. Don't be

afraid. If you see a chance to lie, lie. And be picturesque. I am a good liar, an extraordinary liar, a finished, polished, ingenious, life-long liar; and I can lie you out of any lie you tell, no matter how confused you get. Only be serious and wholly in earnest. Now from here we start. This "— pointing to me —" and I are in this district boring for coal on behalf of myself. I live in Montreal. *You* are very naturally running the drill, and we have driven in to Mr. McLeod's for the night. Our horse is in the barn, and we are very tired. That is all you have to remember." He turned to Mr. McLeod. "Would you be good enough to acquaint your family with these facts and the general situation," he said, and Mr. McLeod went away, confused, but hopeful. We heard Mrs. McLeod being called out for a consultation on domestic matters, and after the pianist had irrelevantly roared "Whoa!" in different keys several times, and we had made mixed sounds in the porch, like people unburdening themselves from outer garments, we went in, to find her seated, knitting, with a stiff upper lip, beside two men who faced a table and ate.

No member of the expedition had ever before been within arm's-length of Mr. Joseph Howe Corbin; no one of us could properly be said to have seen him. On one feverish occasion three of those present had known him as a mighty Voice that proceeded out of a bush that overhung the water, and afterward (because of the breaking of the bush) gave way to filthy and unnatural language; and the same three, at another time, had seen

a dark object, later said to be him, progressing earnestly but painfully along the crest of a ridge of burnt land in an effort to keep pace with a boat that was moved by two pairs of oars and the current. For Mr. Kidderson's part I knew that he had once heard the same Voice discuss with two other men, standing on a culvert, the unlawful doings of some one unknown; the unknown being Mr. Kidderson, who at that time lay under the culvert in a flat and was aware that the bow of the same projected out into the open night. So the chance of seeing Mr. Corbin face to face was almost too much excitement, and he seemed dazed as he was introduced. Whether it was from joy or bashfulness we failed to discover, but he stared at the Head Warden until it was becoming noticeable, when the pianist arose and caught the situation in midair.

"Too bad, Hump," he said; "they must be hurting pretty badly. You 'd better lie down on your left side on the sofa: that 'll ease them," and as Mr. Kidderson recovered his poise and came to rest, groaning appropriately, explained to Mr. Corbin how the jumper beam had swung and cracked two of Humphrey's ribs, and how he had insisted on working when he should n't. Then Mr. Kimborough wheeled properly into the breach and enveloped the Chief Overseer of Fisheries and the surrounding company in a baffling fog of words. It left me free to study and to listen.

Mr. Corbin's assistant had been presented as Mr. McDonald, which in eastern Nova Scotia conveys nothing. It is sufficient to say that he was a dark-colored

McDonald, and seemed to have been bred in the depressing atmosphere of Canadian local elections. The Head Warden himself was a medium-sized, reddish Scotchman, doubtless all Highland blood on his mother's side. He had small eyes that traveled, and he snuffed. He looked unhappy, and you could see his trouble at a glance. It has happened before. It was this: never, since he could think, had he done one little thing, except eat, without having some little plan so mean that the average man could n't think it, so transparent that the average man could n't believe it, as the mainspring. So he believed that every one else had a little plan in everything as well, which made him very miserable, and utterly dried up what should have been the well-spring of his heart. Mr. Simpson expressed it beautifully later on: "Money," he said, "is the only thing I 'd trust him with." At the present moment he was regarding the pianist with disfavor, for the average Scotchman is seldom convinced by words, except that he rules the earth — at a St. Andrews dinner. Ordinarily he is only dazed, and has a suspicion that there is something wrong. Mr. Kimborough noted this from the first, and I could see him spreading his net and pegging it down, corner by corner. But what he was striving for I had no more idea than an unborn child. It was all words.

As the wardens moved back from the table and opened their jack-knives, Henry Simpson, to fulfil his destiny as a tired man, disposed himself in a deep rocking-chair brought from the sitting-room, tilted his head

back on an antimacassar, and appeared to sleep. Mr. Anderson lowered himself on the end of the invalid's sofa, and Mr. Kimborough talked, while I followed the labyrinth in vain. It was a beautiful talk. Though at first I could see Mr. Corbin looking patiently over our boots for fish-scales, toward the middle even he must have been convinced. We were almost convinced ourselves. The pianist gave a masterly geological history of the coal-measures in that part of Nova Scotia, leading up with emotion to his reasons for boring. He invented several authorities, and controverted them with some heat, until he got Mr. Corbin to admit that in his opinion that was so. Then he said that the trouble with that part of Nova Scotia in these days was that the miners were too well paid and would n't stick to their work. (I had been wallowing astern trying in vain to make out even some general course.) He said further that things were very different in times gone past, he believed: and to times gone past he reverted, and so, circuitously, through ten minutes, to Joseph Howe, who was a very great man. *Was* Mr. Corbin named after him! Well! well! (Here Mr. Simpson suffered an impediment in his snore.) He remembered an extraordinary story told by Howe of the Government's investigations of a mysterious affair that very closely affected a man then in the room: he referred to Mr. Kidderson. (Here Mr. Kidderson, who had had both eyes closed, opened one slowly, as an elderly spaniel does, and slowly closed it again. Mr. Simpson's chair, which had been rocking almost imperceptibly, came to an icy stop.)

Only that afternoon, Mr. Kimborough continued, he had been asking Mr. Kidderson about the affair, and it turned out that the two old people who had so mysteriously disappeared had been Mr. Kidderson's grandfather and grandmother; and, still more strange, to-day, October 27, was the anniversary of their death. But no doubt Mr. Corbin lived in these parts, and knew all about it.

Mr. Corbin said no; he was just driving through.

"Tell him the story yourself, Hump," suggested the pianist. Mr. Kidderson seemed startled, but recovered.

"No, no," he said; "you tell it. You know it just as well as I do — an' it makes me sick to talk about it. (Here Mr. Simpson slowly woke up, and under cover of a yawn I saw him bestow one surprised but gratified glance on Mr. Kidderson.)

"It 's not much of a story," said Mr. Kimborough, sternly looking Mrs. McLeod over for signs of hysterics, "but it 's the strangeness of it — that they should never have found out. You said the farm was less than half a mile from here?"

"Two farms down; other side of the river," said Mr. Kidderson.

"What river?" inquired the pianist, absently.

"They call it the Black River," Mr. Corbin broke in, visibly interested.

"Oh! Well, Humphrey's grandmother and grandfather lived there, and one afternoon in October — 27th — that was what year? '67; yes; the old gentleman went down by the river — I remember the river now —

to look for some cattle — had to go through some woods —"

"That steep patch leadin' from Crawford's pasture down to the Mill Set," remarked Mr. Kidderson to Mr. Anderson.

"He did n't come back," the pianist resumed, "and about dusk the old lady went to look for him — and she did n't come back; so Hump's father went to look for both with a lantern, and could n't find a sign of them. The cattle were there on the intervale, but every time he 'd try to get near them they 'd stampede. That was curious, was n't it?" Mr. Corbin snuffed and nodded. "Then they got hold of everybody they could with lanterns and torches, and hunted all night, and could n't get a trace of them, nor the next day — not a track or a sound."

"Hm!" said Mr. Corbin, and while the pianist paused, the rain from the eaves dripped mournfully on the roof of the porch.

"Then — when did they start hunting again?"

"They come up an' got something to eat, an' started in again about five the next evening," said Mr. Kidderson, reminiscently.

"Yes," the pianist went on; "and when they went down, the cattle stampeded again; broke right away across the river, you said,"— Mr. Kidderson nodded,— "and they found the old lady and the old gentleman dead, right out in open sight, on the edge of the intervale and the woods, in a place they 'd gone over a hundred times before. The bodies were laid out side by

side as nicely as could be, and there was n't a track on the ground about them, except cattle; but "— the pianist leaned forward —" their heads were turned round so that the faces were at the back, twisted on the necks in some way, but without a mark."

Mrs. McLeod's knitting had stopped, and she wore an expression of unforced horror. Mr. Corbin said, " Well, that 's extraordinary ! " and all eyes were turned on Mr. Kidderson, who moaned as he shifted his position.

" An' they could n't get 'em back," he said sadly. " I was only a little boy, but I remember them tryin'; but it was no use. It seemed to be something inside. So they did n't know whether to bury 'em on their backs — that is, face down — or on their faces — I mean on their stummicks — that is, face up,—" Mr. Kidderson demonstrated with his hands, endeavoring to make his point clear,—" but at last they buried 'em on their stummicks. And they never found out anything to this day. Abso-lootly don't know anything about it." At this stage Mr. Simpson sneezed violently twice, and rose to his feet complaining of a draft and saying that he thought the outside door must be open and he would go and see. From the porch he murmured something about its being time to water the horse, and I heard his footsteps moving toward the barn. At the last it seemed to me they moved with a certain restrained haste like those of one leaving the saloon of a liner in the middle of a meal. Mr. McLeod apparently heard the sound also, for he scraped his chair noisily on the hearthstone.

"Never got any clue at all?" said Mr. Corbin, with knitted brow.

"Never," said the pianist; "but Humphrey was telling me a curious story to-day. He says down there they 'll tell you that on the night of every 27th of October — warm seasons like this — any cattle that are out will stampede up and down that intervale. Shows how silly superstitions are started by old stories, eh?"

"Hmm!" said Mr. Corbin; "yes, it does, don't it?" Mr. Kimborough acquiesced that it did, and I said I would go and lend Henry a hand with the horse. Inside the barn door I heard sounds like some one threshing with a flail, mingled with sobs, and found him lying on his face in a pile of straw, and beating the straw with his feet.

"I never come so near congestion of the brain in my life," he stuttered through the dark. "Ain't Hump a daisy! True, now, would you ever ha' thought it of him?"

"Never," I said.

"An' y'r friend with the high-press nervous system — he 's a whale; he 's a lally-paloozer." (This spelling is phonetic. I believe the word properly means a club they use for killing salmon in British Columbia.) "He 's got the natural knack of tellin' a smooth an' sweet lie. You can hear the waters flow an' see the sun go down. He 's a bird. But where was he wadin' to?" Mr. Simpson sat up properly, and with difficulty lighted a pipe. "Was he tryin' to scare the old man off the river for the night? For if he was, I believe

he 's done it: he was lookin' very serious when I was called away."

I was forced to shake my head again to indicate the entirety of my ignorance as to what that wonderful person's plans might or might not have been. "But," I said, "you can be sure of one thing: you can still look for the unexpected; and that 's all I know." We sat and talked on together in the darkness and within a quarter of an hour heard the last of the rain die down and the drip from the eaves thin and slow and cease. Finally, as Mr. Simpson happened to look up, he said:

"Hello, church is out!" Through the porch door came the Head Warden and his assistant, in overcoats, followed by Mr. McLeod with a lantern. In the kitchen we could see Mr. Kidderson, stark and motionless on his couch, and Mr. Anderson and the pianist solemnly going through the preliminaries to undressing for bed, though it was not half-past eight. We largely rustled the straw and stepped out to express our surprise that Mr. Corbin should be going on; but he said he had business down-country that had to be attended to before morning, and smiled wisely at Mr. McLeod, who smiled wisely back. So Mr. Henry Simpson, hooking in the breeching, took up the smile also, and smiled learnedly, saying that he thought he (Corbin) must be a deputy sheriff, and Mr. Corbin said, "Maybe," and mysteriously climbed up, with his assistant, into a wagon in which the king-pin rattled obtrusively as he drove away into outer darkness. Mr. Anderson and the pianist came out with their suspenders hanging, and stood on

the door-step in the lantern-light and waved a soft farewell, and, as the sounds of traffic faded beyond the top of the next ridge, fled again for the kitchen, where we followed. Altogether it had been a most effective departure.

Mr. Kidderson was already on his feet, straightening himself with heart-breaking groans, and painfully girding himself for action. Mr. and Mrs. McLeod were prostrated in two chairs, and the pianist and Mr. Anderson were fiercely pulling on rubber boots and ordering Mr. Simpson and me to bring the rest of the stuff from the shed.

"What I went out for specially," Mr. Anderson grunted, "was to get the sound of that king-pin down perfect. To-night, with no wind, and things as dead still as they are, I think I could pick it out across two miles of open country."

"You're in the Mill Set?" inquired Mr. McLeod, between spasms. Mr. Kidderson nodded. "Then he can't get at ye from this side for the big bank. He'll have to go down and round by the Glenfairley Bridge and worry the Stewarts an' that lot first on the way up. You've got plenty of time." With this Mr. Kidderson agreed, but Mr. Anderson and the pianist were mistrustful, and said so.

"Mine enemy is gone forth into the night," chanted the latter, waving an arm abroad, "and behold I must go also, that I may utterly destroy him from out the earth; and these things are not accomplished as a breath of summer wind — so come on." But Mrs. McLeod

seemed to be listening for something in the upper atmosphere.

In the same instant, feet, many feet, and without question large feet, moved overhead, beyond the ceiling. They moved without hurry, but as with one thought, as though it were breakfast-time, toward the stairs, down which they came disposedly. We of the expedition, speechless, looked at one another and at Mr. and Mrs. McLeod. Mr. and Mrs. McLeod looked at the door of the stairway, unperturbed, and from the door proceeded four men, of which the foremost exhibited the lank neck and moist red mustache of Mr. Tyss Burnett, whom I recognized from a year before, and who smiled. My first impulse was not to acquaint Mr. Burnett with the fact that I had helped to rob him of his net on that occasion; my second was to wonder what the next development in the evening's entertainment might be. In the meantime the quartet were introducing themselves freely to the pianist and expressing their appreciation. They also had followed the tragedy of Humphrey's grandparents, through a disused stovepipe-hole, and, having known Humphrey from his early youth, were greatly impressed. Mr. Simpson groped and addressed Mr. McLeod.

"Am I to understand," he said, "that besides harborin' the Head Warden, you 've got every driftwood-cussin' poacher in the Black River concealed among the latticework of this fortress? What are *you* doin' here?"

"We come for tea," explained Mr. Burnett, some-

what abashed, "thinkin' we 'd go down an' try the Mill Set after dark, when suddenly his Whiskers arrived, and as we was acquainted, we thought we 'd go into the roof for a spell. Now, as you 're in the Mill Set, we 'll go farther up. That 's all."

"*Ain't* this a wonderful country!" said Mr. Simpson to the pianist, and again the pianist admitted that it was.

Then all together, because Mrs. McLeod insisted, we had tea, and all together, after reluctant good-bys, we advanced on the unresisting river, with the dog that was part mastiff fleeing before us like a dry leaf before the gales of autumn. The rain and the wind were utterly dead; the clouds still hung unbroken, and after the light and the noise of the house, the valley of the Black River lay as dark as a deep cavern at midnight and as silent as a high mountain at noon. At a place where I was restrained by Mr. Kidderson from walking into the river itself, Mr. Burnett and his natives produced two unpainted and crazy flats from under an inadequate bush, and, walking them as surely as a pavement, poled away up-stream, using the butt-ends of salmon-spears. We, in our turn, unhitched the dinghy and, as silently as the foam-clots that met us, rowed down again through the black, unbroken woods, past the intervale with the live stock, and out on the deep-shadowed bosom of the Mill Set, where our opening pupils made out once more the blacker curve of our backrope in the dark. The dinghy moved down on its center with Mr. Kidderson, his ribs again neglected, leaning out over the bow, and

as the backrope scraped the stem, he seized it and raised it an arm's swing above his head. Thus the salmon fishermen feel for them.

In that moment the law in its majesty and all its officers were forgotten. At the word of command I put my hand on the net and felt it twitch, and in the same second, near the shore, over the gravel bottom of the shoal west bank, rose up a splash, and thither we rowed furiously. Then all was pandemonium, and flying October water. They landed a thirty-six pound salmon, net and all, fair in the pianist's lap, where they proceeded to "unmash" him; and you could n't hear yourself shout. Finally, when he lay thrashing in the bottom of the boat, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Kidderson were hugging another, the tail of which slapped Mr. Kidderson's forehead as they worked.

"He 's swallowed it, and one of the bricks." This from Mr. Simpson.

"Then turn him wrong-side out," shouted the pianist, burning with enthusiasm.

"Shove him through it," in Mr. Kidderson's voice. "Great Lord! there 's another! Whoopee!" as Mr. Anderson, on his knees, deftly slipped him out into the stern-sheets. "Hi! Sock the beggar with an oar before he goes overboard!" And so it went, while the dinghy rocked and roared her way across the river until seven salmon, from eighteen to thirty-eight pounds, lay thumping the planking in her bottom. Mr. Kidderson ran them over with his hand and broke into open cheers until he was restrained with threats. Even as he

cheered, two more fish raised themselves from the river and went over the backrope, a clean five-foot leap, and boiled on up-stream, followed by the advice that a man named Burnett would be looking for them at the ford.

Then came a moment's rest, which broadened out into a period of quiet such as this expedition had not seen. Though at the time we knew it not, this, in the manner of the Great Artist, was only a fitting introduction to the events that were to come; for it happened that our cup of joy had not even begun to fill. For Mr. Kidderson and Mr. Anderson, who apparently wished only for salmon, it was an era of rising tide and great promise, and of blessed respite from interference on the part of the law. For Mr. Simpson and me, who lived patiently in the hope of more excitement, it was a time of hope deferred that maketh the heart sick. For the pianist it appeared to be only a golden opportunity to perform certain things of which we had no knowledge. His faith was as the faith that moveth mountains and maketh the sun to stand still, and his care was the care of genius.

We grounded the dinghy on the east bank, directly beneath the convenient fence-post that held the straining backrope; for there she became the center of all future tactics. And this is how. It is a most beautiful arrangement worked out by those thoughtful Black River brains during sleepless nights. That fence-post is on the end of a bare, low, intervale point that faces down-river. Across the river the other end of the net, as has been said, is made fast to a boulder at the bottom of a

forty-foot bank, down which no man may come and live. Thus, one who would approach by land must come by the east bank and out on that intervale point. And so, when the wardens come, unheralded and by stealth, in the manner of wardens, the breaker of the law, seated in his own ship, which is afloat upon the waters, can pull on one rope once, this rope controlling a slip-knot, by which the end of the net is bound to the fence-post, and immediately, without further labor of any kind, he is floated away on the bosom of the stream as it runs to the sea, holding to the end of the net, by which he is carried across under the opposite bank, where he is not attainable, and can take in his net and pick sticks and autumn leaves out of the same at his leisure, if he considers it desirable, and whence, at the same time, he can address the wardens in their own tongue in such language as seems to him fitting; and he need not even raise his precious voice, for the rocks behind him reflect sound perfectly. This was explained at great length by Humphrey Kidderson, who pointed out how its simple beauty all depended on the working of the slip-knot, and Mr. Simpson and I said we yearned to see it worked, and especially for Mr. Corbin.

But throughout a silent and age-long hour the patient elements gave no sign, and we sat close about the post on the edge of the bank and whispered. Once we were interrupted by two salmon striking the net, and these were gathered to their rest. In the meantime the pianist had disappeared into the hinterland, and for a long time we could hear him moving about softly on the mys-

terious borderline between the intervale and the woods. Frequently we heard a sharp click and the thrill of cut wire, and inferred that the wire-pliers had come into action at last. At the end of the hour he appeared suddenly beside us, and we could see his smile in the dark.

"Any one invading this territory from the forest is going to get into horrible difficulties," he volunteered. "I 've cut up about three hundred yards of old fence and built entanglements specially designed for infantry."

So we waited through another half-hour, during which another salmon arrived, but was permitted to stay where he was; and still no Mr. Corbin. Then, just at the turning of the tide, when every creek and inlet in that night-covered country was filled to its topmost banks, a great trouble came to Mr. Kidderson. He developed an internal pain. He believed that without question it had resulted from over-exerting his ribs; the ends felt as if they were striking through somewhere they should n't.

"Boys," he groaned, "I 'm going to die, an' we 'll have to go home. The tide 's high, anyway." The pianist was almost weeping with disappointment.

"Better wait a little longer and see how you feel," he urged. "It would n't be safe to travel as bad as you are now." Mr. Simpson joined in.

"If you 'r' goin' t' die, Hump, y' can die just as well here as home, if y' 'd only die quiet enough — or we could take ye up to Malcolm McLeod's." Finally Mr. Kidderson thought that if he had a really good place to lie down, he might feel better, and the pianist sprang at the chance.

" In four minutes," he said, " I 'll make you the finest bed you ever slept on," and in a moment he was dragging a sleeping-bag and a pair of great four-point blankets out of the dinghy. " Come on," he said, " I know a place." He led Mr. Kidderson away, groaning, and in a little we heard them moving carefully in the woods almost above us, where they gradually nestled down like a heron rookery at sunset. In a straight line they were hardly twenty-five feet from the point where we stood, and between lay a little backwater.

Once more we settled, and the pianist came down to confer, when I saw Mr. Anderson raise his hand.

" The king-pin! " he murmured. We listened, and at first could hear nothing. Then we caught it, going slowly and carefully a long way off, one thin sound in miles of silence, sometimes louder, sometimes occulted by trees or a little hill.

" Glory be! " said the pianist. We lifted the dinghy afloat and climbed in as silently as shadows. " Now I 'll go and tell Hump," he whispered, leaning over the bow. Even as he spoke there came from up the intervale the loud twang of a wire, with the thud and squelch of a heavy body falling in soft marsh, followed by more twangs and thuds and the subdued voice of one man swearing continuously.

" Our friend Mr. Corbin is now engaged in arrivin'," said Mr. Simpson, under bated breath, " an' y'r woven-wire man-trap seems to be workin' like a fire-engine. My! ain't he pleased! " as further twangs and thuds and another blast of restrained profanity swept through the

darkness. "Sounds as if he was tryin' to play a banjo with his feet, don't it?" I saw the pianist stoop and pick up the two salmon-spears from where we had laid them on the bank, and in the twinkling of an eye he had vanished, bearing them away with him.

"All incriminatin' letters destroyed," Mr. Simpson added in the same moment.

"Pull!" breathed Mr. Anderson. "Quick!" The backrope lay under my hand, and I jerked. The fence-post sprung audibly, there was a light splash that ran all across the river, the faintest *wisp* of the net through the water, the least grating of gravel, and the dinghy swung away with us into black silence until we approached that towering bank and lay under it, head up-stream. The slip-knot had worked. My head was close to Mr. Simpson's.

"Do you think they heard?" I said.

"No chance in the world; too far away. The deceivin' old sinner! Hired a third party to keep drivin' that king-pin round among these mountains so that any innocent farmer who might be seekin' the necessities of life at the Mill Set would notice that it continued to keep on goin', while him an' that other heavier-than-air treasury suckling glided out over the revolvin' wheels and floated down the nearest wood-road. *There* they are. Look at 'em comin' on fairy feet. See his giblets' whiskers stuck out ahead. Don't he look fierce!" Mr. Simpson hardly more than shaped the words with his lips. I had to say that these details were beyond me. All I could see was two objects without form moving

cautiously and noiselessly out on the bare intervale point, until, at the extreme end, in the region of our fence-post, they seemed to fade away into nothing. It was all very indistinct — shadows moving in the deepest shadow.

The night held as black as a mine. The clouds hung even and low and unbroken. The calm remained perfect. The high tide had stilled even the voice of the river over the riffles, and the silence boomed softly in one's ears, keeping time with the heart, as on a mountain. The only sounds at all were faint and long-separated thuds from the hoofs of the cattle on the upper intervale. Then certainly for twenty throbbing minutes that silence went on. Once, fifteen miles away among the wet spruces, a locomotive whistled, and the blast trembled and broke and wailed itself out on every unseen hill in that whole parish. Once a curled sheet of something white, doubtless birch-bark, rode slowly past on the current, and that was the only moving thing I saw.

At last Mr. Anderson, proceeding like the minute-hand of a watch, bent nearer.

"They 've sat down on the bank by the fence-post," he said. "Can't see what his little game can be. He certainly can't tell we 're here. Or, if he did know it in any way, what is he going to do about it? Unless he knows we 're in this boat, and has got some one set for us at the Glenfairley Bridge."

"More likely," submitted Mr. Simpson, "his fatal cleverness has led him to sneak down an' sit among the

evergreens over our heads while Humphrey was havin' his pain an' gettin' his death-bed prepared, so that now his little chest is inflated with the knowledge that he has this expedition divided, an' that all the evidence will be in the ship, an' that the ship won't sail without makin' an effort to collect the rest of the crew, and that he 'll wait till it does — when there will be war. By-an'-by he 'll be so happy an' comfortable he 'll smoke. You see."

Mr. Anderson swept away this suggestion with a jerk of his chin. His professional pride was bruised.

"If you don't know me better by this time than to think any boot-footed bush-loafer can walk in the woods over my head without my knowing it, ye learn slow, that 's all," he said, and Mr. Simpson admitted that he might be wrong. Which later proved to be the case. In the meantime, having failed to deduce Mr. Corbin's thoughts, we ceased whispering, waiting for what might come to pass, and once more that great silence came down and lay like a mantle over the whole earth. Mr. Simpson and I reposed comfortably on sleeping-bags, with our faces turned up to the unseen firmament, and Mr. Anderson crouched like a cat, staring across the stream in the direction of the mysterious Mr. Corbin, who, it seemed, might be the winner in the end. I remember when at last the stillness was disturbed for one second by something on our shore. It was not a great noise. It might have been a meadow-mouse upsetting a dead maple-leaf. Immediately afterward I saw the shadow of Mr. Anderson's hand touch Henry Simpson's forehead and point

across the river. Mr. Simpson turned his head, and I heard him breathe, "Gentle Jehoshaphat!" I looked. From where we lay, the length of the net down-stream, we could see up into the little backwater that separated Mr. Corbin's earthworks, to the left, from the high, wooded bank, to the right, on one moss-clad shelf of which the pianist had laid Mr. Humphrey Kidderson. On the glassy surface of that backwater, near its mouth and fair in its center, moved a little globule of purple-pink fire. As we stared, in speechless and frozen astonishment, it changed to palest blue and suddenly disappeared. Before we could speak, out of the blinded obscurity came a crackle, as of a slight electric spark, then nothing but that vast silence again. Then I caught the slow-taken indraft of Mr. Simpson's breath.

"Will-o'-the-Wisp," he murmured uneasily. "I often heard of 'em, but never seen one before." Mr. Anderson considered this point, and placed it with elaborate accuracy.

"'Bout as much like a Will-o'-the-Wisp as you 're like Humphrey's grandmother," he said.

"Never mind about Humphrey's gran'mother, will y'?" Mr. Simpson replied, and I heard him swallow several times. "But if it was n't a Will-o'-the-Wisp, what was it?" I could see Mr. Anderson shaking his head. "I 've heard of quite a lot of different kinds of lightnin'." Mr. Anderson's head still shook.

"Don't know"— Here this hardly breathed conversation ceased, for another globule of purple-pink fire broke out on the surface of the backwater, but

nearer the wooded bank, where it lighted one overhanging dead branch dimly with a ghastly blue light before it itself turned blue-white and vanished. Again, a few seconds later, out of the black darkness, came that little nerve-racking crackle, this time so faint as to make you think it might have been in your own ears. Then suddenly appeared two globules of fire, but now out on the main river, between Mr. Corbin's stronghold and us. For a moment they held steady, then ran about like maddened stars, and we could see what appeared to be faint columns of pale vapor ascending from each, till, almost at the same instant, they, too, vanished, and the crackle came again.

Here followed a longish black pause, and I am certain that I could hear not even a breath taken in that dinghy. At the end the manifestation returned to the backwater, for again two points of fire broke out and moved, and the pale vapor ascended and was reflected in that mirror-like calm. But this time with a difference, for above them, three feet or more above the water and apparently resting on the vapor (I state but the facts), was a devil, a purplish-pink devil, and the devil danced. It was an unconventional devil. It was unlike any devil I have ever seen or read about. It may not have had horns, I do not know whether it had a cloven hoof, or any kind of a hoof; and it certainly did not have a tail, or, if it did, it was a stunted tail like a rabbit's: but I am convinced that it was a devil. It either had to be a devil or an angel, and, as it was only about two feet high, it was too small for an angel, and I never heard of an angel dancing over two

globules of fire above the surface of a half-wild river at midnight. Of course I have heard of other kinds of spirits, but they are unofficial, and I don't believe in them. In any case, at this point in the proceedings I heard Mr. Simpson say very softly: "Well, I'm damned!" so it was evident that he saw it, too. The devil lasted a very short time, and then went out: or rather, the globules of fire went out, and the terrible thought was that the devil might still be there, or here, or anywhere else. I saw Mr. Simpson feel the back of his neck, but no one said anything. Then the devil came on again with one globule of fire under him, but this time he was higher up in the air over the same spot and much more indistinct. He moved with great uncertainty before he disappeared.

Then there was a very long and breathless pause in which I thought I heard one *snap*. It might have been a twig, or it might have been something inside my head. Suddenly there were several *plops* and half a dozen globules of fire played on the backwater. Then as one by one they went out, each with its crackle, and our eyes became partly accustomed to the dark again, we saw a very terrible thing about halfway up that wooded bank. It seemed to be white and it was a full fifteen feet high. It swayed easily and bowed gracefully from the hips, and it appeared to be full of a faint light that played about among its vitals. Aside from these things it seemed to be without form, and void. Altogether it was a most awe-inspiring sight. It had a nasty way of leaning out over the backwater, as though it thought of flut-

tering down on the intervale point where the Head Warden was watching. Further, it had a distressing habit of going out into almost utter obscurity and coming on again.

After perhaps two minutes of swaying it stood solemnly and silently upright, among the spruces, and there came forth from its direction a low, whistling moan that increased and wavered. I cannot describe it at all, but it was one of the most terrible sounds I ever heard. At the same time I became aware of the thuds of hoofs as we had heard them on the upper intervale, but much closer and heavier. They were coming down the intervale in regular beat, as though the cattle were in full stampede, and the moan from the fifteen-foot ghost rose to a wail, and thence mounted into a shriek. More than anything else it was like that frightful cry of the Canada lynx, or perhaps like a lost soul in torment, though I have never heard one of these latter, and it died down again into a moan that was lost in the pounding and squelching of the hoofs of the oncoming cattle. It was answered by a smother of sounds from Mr. Corbin's stronghold. There was a whimpering yell, such as might come from a man thoroughly unstrung, that tailed off into curses and prayers,— we could actually hear some one calling on Heaven to forgive and help,— and we saw two shadows, very close together, fleeing at notable speed up the intervale. The nerve of the Head Warden had collapsed, and he was flying on the wings of a great fear into the outside world. But he was too late. The cattle had reached the head of the little backwater and were

Suddenly the water all about the wardens blossomed into those wonderful, running, fiery globules

thundering down the point like a herd of bison of the days gone past. Later we found there were just seventeen head of steers, but it was enough. We saw the two shadows turn and flee down the point ahead of them, and from the end of the point plow out into the water, where they stopped, waist-deep, while the steers checked on the brink and lowed with fright. Suddenly the water all about the wardens blossomed into those wonderful, running, fiery globules till the scene was lighted with their ghostly light. A second later a series of little explosions came from the edge of the water, under the very feet of the cattle, the air about them was full of fiery stars, and they turned as one steer and fled up the intervale again, overwrought with terror. And the representatives of the law climbed out of the Black River and fled on their tracks, which no doubt helped to increase their terror, if that were possible. In any case, they passed quickly from our dull sight, and in a little the sounds had died down to a frightened lowing very far away up-stream, and a slashing of spruce branches somewhere high up on the west bank. And the fifteen-foot ghost may have followed after, for when I turned my fascinated eyes backward, the space where it had been hung empty in the dark.

As for our dinghy, the *Rorqual's* best spar-varnished dinghy, she was prancing like a charger, for Mr. Simpson and Mr. Anderson, in helpless silence and with clenched fists, were rising up and sitting down in a choking ecstasy of excitement and glee. At last Mr. Simpson gasped, " How in God's world did he do it ? " If I had

been in a condition to reply, I had no reply to offer, but, in any case, the question was swept away by four figures walking toward us on the water from the direction of up-river. These resolved themselves into Mr. Tyss Burnett and his natives in the two disreputable flats, still standing up loosely, coasting down on the current, and wishing to know, for the sake of the Lord of the Universe, what the row had been about. They said they considered they had been more or less in at the finish, and that in their several different lengths and varieties of lives they had never seen anything that remotely resembled it in any way, whatever, at all.

"A yell like a lucifee," said Mr. Burnett, "then steers — millions of steers runnin' up the intervale like the mill-tail o' hell, an' some one cryin' an' cursin' behind 'em!" The end of the net had been forgotten, and had softly gone overboard, and we were drifting downstream sidewise in company with the reeling flats, while Mr. Simpson, with a wealth of wonderful detail, stood up and told his broken story, until those men of the Black River sat down, and from sitting down lay down on the wet bottoms of the flats, and rolled from side to side in their agony. For proof, poling and rowing uproariously, we went back to the point with the fence-post where Mr. Kidderson and the pianist were only then arriving. Mr. Kimborough must have been partly undressed for ease of movement, for he was robing himself as he came, and at the same time dancing a ceaseless and intricate dance. For some time he could not be induced to speak, but at last, in the midst of a fairy-

ring, he stopped to reply to Mr. Simpson's inquiry as to how.

"Gentlemen," he said, "all great artistic triumphs are great only in their perfect simplicity. This was as simple as the sunrise; hence its effectiveness. It was the logical sequence of it that made it beautiful. The fire-works were little pieces of potassium that I had in this bottle,"— he held up an inconspicuous something in the dark,—"which burns when you throw it on water, and after it goes out, what is left blows up and makes that little crackle in the dark. It is all highly unnatural on a wet, cold river at midnight, and so is very striking to the mind that has been carefully prepared. Later, when I wanted it to blow up at once and make louder explosions to remove the steers up the intervale again, I threw in bigger pieces of potassium, because that 's what *they* do. The little devil over the water was a little rubber devil that was filled full of my own breath. I keep it for a conjuring trick that amuses children. It came out of the black bag." (This last to me.) "I had it on a fishing-line and a birch pole. The big devil on the bank was the four-point blanket stuck on a salmon-spear, with me and the lightning-bug — squirt-lamp — electric flashlight inside, an' then at the end I sent Hump to bring home the cows. He pretty nearly got his neck twisted like his grandmother when they went back again, but he forgot about his ribs once more."

"Rose from his death-bed to save his countrymen," chimed Mr. Simpson. Mr. Kidderson spoke confidentially to me.

"I guess there was some flatulency mixed in with that pain about the ribs," he said.

"*And* the lucifee?" inquired Mr. Burnett.

"Oh," said the pianist, with modesty, "I yelled; but at that stage in the game any kind of yell would do. We 'd laid the foundation of what they call an atmosphere, and there was a ghost in every alder."

We salved the net from the bottom of the river, and it took four men and the flash-lamp to unravel the one salmon, for in our absence he had used it as a winding-sheet.

"We lifted," said Mr. Burnett, "because the rain had raised the river, an' when the tide started to run out, we was gettin' everything from leaves to telephone-poles. An' if it 's all the same to you, we 'll hide our flats here and go down with you as far as the Glenfairley Bridge."

So we left those scenes, nine men in one thirteen-foot dinghy, and the Stewarts, farther down, said later that when we passed it sounded like a sleigh-drive, and that one of them had a providential escape from being hit by a flask. This was doubtless a flask that Mr. Simpson found in a pocket and a minute afterward threw away.

All together we climbed out on the Glenfairley Bridge, where the crew of the dinghy produced the thermostatic bottles and invited the strangers to breakfast. The time was 1:10 A. M. This meal was taken standing, and we were in the midst of it, and of certain reminiscences that would have drowned a thunder-storm, when a vehicle with a loose king-pin, being driven rapidly, broke out of the woods on the west side of the river and bore

down on the bridge. It carried a large and lighted lantern on the dash. The natives turned, and at the end of three seconds of time the darkness had received them into its bosom.

"No," said the pianist, sternly, "you stand your ground. I am operating this kaleidoscope." The Burnett family slunk back, Mr. Tyss thoughtfully dropping his net over the coping into the dinghy.

"Wardens don't carry lanterns, anyway," he said hopefully.

"Don't know about that," said Mr. Anderson; "but I do know that king-pin." The vehicle came to a spectacular stop, with our party blinking in the full light of the lantern, and Mr. Corbin descended. The pianist frugally laid a chicken leg on the bridge-rail and fanned himself with his sou'wester so that his face might be the better seen. The Head Warden looked at the face in amazement, then mechanically at the boots, which were visibly overlaid with fish-scales, as were all the others in sight. Then he recovered himself and smiled bitterly.

"Out borin' for coal?" he inquired, with elaborate sarcasm.

"No," said Mr. Kimborough, cheerfully; "netting salmon."

"Did you get any?" Mr. Corbin continued, partly stunned by this frankness.

"Lots. The boat 's full of 'em — nets an' everything. Like to see them?" The Burnetts and their guests were dancing in the background.

"See 'em! I 'd like to take 'em, an' damn quick, too. Don't ye know ye can't net salmon?"

"Don't you believe it," broke in Mr. Simpson. "You ought to see us!"

"Are you a warden?" inquired the pianist with pained surprise.

"I am," replied Mr. Corbin, bristling.

"Oh," said Mr. Simpson, "we had two wardens call up at the Mill Set, but we could n't get 'em to stay. Is your pants wet?"

"Hell!" said Mr. Corbin.

"Look!" said the pianist. He had been fumbling with something, and now held a jack-knife out beyond the edge of the coping. On the black water below there bloomed out a globule of purple-pink fire, which ran about with great enthusiasm, and after it vanished there came a crackle out of nowhere. For a couple of purple-pink seconds Mr. Corbin was silent, probably drawing breath as a singer. Then — and his face was accurately purple-pink by the lantern light — he broke into the long, full, rhythmical lilt of the expert who has gathered the language of unrighteousness through a lifetime of tribulation and misunderstanding. He never paused for one little word: everything was finished and smooth and lovely in its appropriateness. None of the notable words will bear reporting at all. The thoughts could only have arisen from the suspicion that for a long time he had been mocked by the whole bad Black River.

His theme was us. He began with the assumption

that we were of unsound mind and that our home was in an asylum. Then he found all accepted theological divisions of gods and goddesses too limited for working purposes, and stepped aside to subdivide them anew under our naked and wondering eyes before he proceeded. He said that our parents exhibited grave defects of a minutely qualified and extensively particularized sort. (Some of you may be able to translate a little. I am helpless.) He assured us that our education had been perverted, that our outlook was diseased, and that our horizon was limited to lust. He indicated that our physical functions were deranged, and made it evident before high heaven that in personal appearance we were repulsive and that our eyes showed the effects of alcoholic liquors. Up to this point everything had been consummated within the bounds of one marvelous sentence, and we stood locked in a knot, and were dumb. After the next indraft he turned his burning attention to our separate personal defects, and all the while he danced. This blistering passage I hate to remember. The things that he called the pianist — I know no method of reducing their pressure sufficiently to give any idea of them in the restrained English of convention. He searched the outer nebulæ and the casual language of obstetrics — but they will have to stand as classics, untranslated and untranslatable. Toward the trembling end he showed why our presence on earth was repugnant to him and all other right-thinking men, and before he had finished, he climbed into the wagon, jerked the reins from his paralyzed assistant, lashed the slumbering steed

with their free ends, and went away with that animal running, while the bridge heaved under our feet.

"Walk y'r horse an' save the fine!" roared Mr. Simpson, quoting from the sign-board on each end. "Hi! Come back! Y' forgot y'r salmon an' the nets." The pianist paced the planks as the stage at Covent Garden.

> "Come back, come back, beloved,
> Come back and claim your own,"

he sang; but the Head Warden had gone.

Everybody looked at everybody, and Mr. Kimborough resumed his chicken leg. We were not sure that Mr. Corbin had not evened up for the night's entertainment.

"Hope y'r nervous system is restin' easier now," Mr. Simpson ventured. "That should have flattened it out some." The pianist said it was.

"And," he added, "that man was wonderful. Don't know about the rest of you, but I was stunned — could n't move hand or foot. Besides, I felt ashamed of myself: he was so much in earnest that he made me believe I was some of those awful things he said. But this is true: I 'll be stronger and can keep my temper better all the rest of my life for knowing those words and how to use 'em — if I can only remember. It 's like a country with a big navy: feel very powerful inside; panic very slow and difficult. Henry, did you know before that you were a — — — — cross-eyed, pock-marked gorilla?"

"Why did n't we kill him?" asked Mr. Simpson.

"Don't know," said the pianist.

"Why did n't he take the nets and the salmon?" inquired Mr. Kidderson.

"Don't know, either: probably because he forgot."

"Well, he 'll remember, won't he?" Mr. Kidderson insisted.

"Never," said the pianist; "never in this life." As he spoke, I felt the first of the cool breeze come in from the northwest.

This is really the end of this story.

When the bed of the Black River at this place was strewn with the bones of chickens, and when each of us in his turn had scalded his esophagus with tea,— because the little metal cups were too hot to be held long in the naked hand,— and the thermostatic bottles were empty, then Mr. Burnett and his natives loaded themselves with wet fish and a bag, and said good-night, and took their departure in this wise: they moved toward the other end of the bridge, and when their feet went off the planking there was silence. They may have stepped on dead grass or into the night air. I do not profess to know; but I know they were no more seen or heard by us. Two minutes later the Glenfairley Bridge stood deserted under the stars, for there were stars then, and we were rowing into the face of a cold and rising northwest breeze. How that breeze grew to a two-hours' squall, through which the *Porpoise* and Mr. Anderson found their way home; how the dinghy broke adrift, and had to be rescued in a spectacular manner on a lee shore full of perils; and how we watched the gray dawn dim the electric light while we were eating illegal salmon

steaks in the *Rorqual's* galley and listening to the whoop of the wind and the slat of the halyards overhead, are all minor incidents.

The pianist and I went home in full daylight under a cold and clear sky, with the wind-blown leaves swirling about our feet; and in a little, from the bath-room, I heard sounds of merriment and repressed cheers where he was living the night over again. He appeared at eight o'clock breakfast as usual, unslept and happy, and at half-past ten, leaving all doors and windows open to the naked sunlight outside, played the A♭ Major Polonaise once. A distant carpet-sweeper stopped, and I heard tentative footsteps approaching, together with other footsteps from other directions, muffled by carpets. The gravel of the drive, that had been crunching under the boots of two men carrying spruce to cover the rose-beds, became suddenly quiet with the swish of the spruce being thrown down. The rattling cart that brought the spruce ceased to rattle, and through a window I could barely see the wondering eyes of its driver. Beyond him two little girls, carrying a jug of buttermilk, stood still; and by the door of the music-room were five of us together. The one who was most thoroughly musical got pinker and pinker, and her breath came quicker and quicker, till toward the finish she was hardly less than sobbing; and the one who was least musical shifted from foot to foot with his feelings, and, as the triumphant end came at last, said, " By God, eh! " whatever that may have meant.

A short time ago Mr. Simpson showed me a newspaper

in which it was stated that the pressure of Mr. Joseph Howe Corbin's other business was so great that he felt called upon to resign his position as chief overseer, and that in his stead there had been appointed one Thomas Leslie Speers, whom we have not met.

## COMPENSATED

### PROVIDENCE MAKES A MINOR ADJUSTMENT

IT may be that a Nova Scotia summer on the Gulf of St. Lawrence is the most perfect season on earth. It may be also that there is a pause, by way of exception, to prove that the rule is true — anything from an ordinary ten-hours, wet southeaster to the great August gale.

First, though this was in the next year, the A♭ Major Polonaise was involved again, as will be duly made evident.

Throughout a sun-swept July that blended alluring calms with breezes out of Paradise I labored indoors fully as faithfully as a man should labor, and on the next to last day I came out into the languorous sunlight of late afternoon with a sense of extreme repose, because I had finished to the last stroke all the work I had to finish. So it was permitted that I should see all the world in its proper perspective and glory. In no other way may you attain to this privilege.

But apparently this was not enough. The immediate reward was to follow. I had no idea that I had done enough to deserve a part in impressive events, though without doubt this was so, for the law of compensation is more just than the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

In the meantime there were no impressive events in sight. One cicada thrilled like a smitten wire from behind an unmoving, crested breaker of clematis, and failed to leave the impression that the day was hot. Below me I had the tree-buried town, and beyond the town, an expansive blue harbor that sparkled because somewhere in the leaves, very far overhead, the cool indraft from the east moved softly up-stream from where the gulf outside lay burnished calm. Beyond the harbor stood the folded hills, not purple, but green to the farthest sky-line; and above towered the stark blue sky.

I descended through the town toward the *Rorqual's* wharf, and while I was yet in the distance — and, I remember, through a small whirlwind of dust that got up and waltzed for twenty seconds — I noted two men in consultation, and they seemed strangely familiar. Or, rather, one of them seemed strangely familiar in that place and at that time. The other resembled Mr. Henry Simpson, the Foremouth blacksmith; and as Foremouth was close at hand, this appearance might readily be, as it frequently was. But the first resembled the pianist, otherwise Mr. F. B. Kimborough, who at this minute, to my certain knowledge, was in Philadelphia. I was attracted further by the color-scheme and tropical luxuriance of the group. Mr. Simpson (for it was unquestionably he) wore, without apparent self-consciousness, trousers of a blue lighter than navy, a grass-green shirt, and a white duck hat. In his arms he bore one dozen naked pineapples and an unbroken bunch of bananas, and later I noted that on the third finger of his left hand

was tied a piece of pink string, evidently associated with something he was not to forget. The pianist (I was coming to see it was he, also) wore a gray flannel suit, a scarlet necktie, glowing tan shoes, and a panama hat of undoubted age and value and authenticity. It was colored like a meerschaum. In his hands he carried six large baskets of grapes covered with purple net.

"*Where* did you come from?" I said from the dust at thirty yards, seeing them regard me.

"Laodicea," said Mr. Kimborough, and smiled. "Not being a dervish, it was too hot. Freddy got tuberculosis. Then Freddy got auricular distension and an aortic aneurism, and cancer, and he was getting on into the secondary symptoms of lockjaw; so he knew it was his liver, and he thought he'd better come." He plowed with his shoes in the overheated dust like a barefooted boy. "Freddy dreamed dreams and saw visions," he said. "He dreamed of the soft, cool rain at night, and he saw the blushing face of Mr. Joseph Howe Corbin, and he said: 'Lo! I come!' and he rose up, and behold, he is here."

"And where are you staying?" I pressed in the pause.

"With you. Didn't you hear? And we are all going codfishing together." His explanatory hand included Mr. Simpson, himself, the fruit, and me, with an indeterminate increment from somewhere outside. This last, I inferred, might mean Mr. Anderson, the navigator of a flat, blindfolded, through hell in a thundersquall. But the pianist was continuing:

"And when Freddy came, the first heartbreaking

landmark that rested his weary eyes was this,"— indicating Mr. Simpson,—" and he said, ' See, Providence, which is inscrutable, has this matter in hand.' "

Mr. Simpson took up the tale.

" Then we started layin' in a few dainties for our personal consumption. He ran mostly to fruit, an' me to beer. These are all his. There is mine comin'." He nodded toward a grocery-wagon navigating a lane.

So we took out Mr. Anderson from the midst of his daily work, with the pain that a little boy is taken from his schooling, and the morning of the next day, being Sunday, found the *Rorqual* anchored beside three fishing pinkies in the bosom of a great calm in a channel in North Harbour, with Mr. Simpson and me, in the dinghy, outside the islands, peacefully overhauling herring nets set the night before in the search for bait. And the bait was slack; for which reason we and the pinkies stayed. This is the way Fate works. There is always a reason.

Now, this was a most wonderful day. From a rose-pink and innocent summer dawn the sun flared up behind the sand of a mile-distant beach into a sky of polished copper, and from that moment until he went away with amazing suddenness at noon, he marched portentously across a fleckless dome and blistered that bight of the Gulf of St. Lawrence with the heat of the Red Sea. Such a temperature I never saw before in that happy country. The air ashore was the superheated steam of boiling brass. The calm was supreme and uncanny. The high, ranked spruces and the quivering rocks piled

behind us to the south, and the islands ahead, two miles to seaward, lay doubled and perfect; and the *Rorqual* and her image and the pinkies and their images hung in an eel-grass bounded channel, as in a silvered mirror, between two skies as unmoving as the dome of St. Paul's. It was much too wonderful, for here also the law of compensation is just.

At eleven o'clock, while the herring nets still worked and all the unheard church bells in the Atlantic standard were aswing, I remember the general distribution. Mr. Kimborough had gone overboard, and was hanging to the foot of the accommodation-ladder with his eyes closed in bliss. On the rail by the gangway Mr. Simpson was jigging perch for supper. This is a methodical sport. The perch, like the Prussian, is an impartial and persistent investigator. You brighten up a leaded hook and let it out, unbaited, at the end of a few yards of line; then you jerk. At the end of every three seconds you jerk again; that is all. At every fifth jerk, with a normal crop, you bring up a perch caught by the jaw, or the tail, or the nape of his neck. Beside Mr. Simpson, the cook skinned and cleaned at high speed. Mr. Anderson was wandering about the deck, with pieces of wire constructing a machine for the massacre of innumerable small fish that drove along the surface. I was in the pilot-house studying a troop of incoming terns and the barometer, which had been going up like a rocket and was now falling like a stick, when beyond an outer beach I saw two high and polished spars that moved against the mirage-distorted wall of the Nova Scotia coast. They

were schooner's spars, and they moved toward the Little Entrance of North Harbour, a seventy-yards' gap between two beaches, through which they came precipitately, towed by a motor tender and with much running about on deck below. Precipitately meant perhaps six and one half knots, six being for the famous tide of that entrance, and the half for the motor tender.

"Schooner yacht becalmed!" said Mr. Simpson, from aft, in spasms, still jigging, "navigatin' by the 'St. Lawrence Pilot,' an'—'Belcher's Almanac,' an' surprised an' pained an' scared — beyond measure by bein' sucked into this — charted estuary like a Noctiluca into —— the esophagus of a whale. Hutt! you beggar!" A fluttering perch escaped between air and water. The pianist came up the pilot-ladder to see.

"What is a Noctiluca?" he inquired. I was forced to shake my head. Later we found in a book that it is a small animal that is highly phosphorescent. The Nova Scotia School System won again.

Seeing us, and doubtless desiring companionship, the schooner yacht came on, white-hulled, with brass-work ablaze in the morning sun, and with one man in the fore-rigging studying the channel. Halfway from the entrance she sheered so that I made out the shape of her bow, and I remembered when and where I had seen her before. It is of no consequence to this story.

"That," I said "is the *Gloria,* the private and exclusive yacht of James Montgomery Sneed, whose residence is in Montreal."

"And what 's his business?" asked the pianist, who

had returned clad informally in a suit of cream pajamas, and was regarding the schooner with a hostile eye. His thoughts were still powerfully on cod-fishing.

Now, this question was pure sacrilege, for in Montreal Mr. Sneed was an instituted god. In spite of the Château de Ramezay, and De Maisonneuve, Montreal is really a younger city than most prairie towns, and is uncertain about its gods and its government. Mr. Sneed had no business. His trouble began with his father, who left him great quantities of money, and Mr. Sneed had spent his life acting as umpire, and watching his bonds and bank stock consume other people's bonds and bank stock, and living on part of what happened to be in the bank. As is widely known, this is an absorbing spectacle, like the Lorelei, and, if the spectator gives himself over to it, in the end it will kill him dead, unless he has some outside interests: and Mr. Sneed had no outside interests, and was as dead as Scipio Africanus, because he did not love anything that was worth loving.

"But the schooner," said the pianist, "is a nice schooner."

"No matter. She is for the dignity of the display. You 'll see for yourself. Then there are Mrs. Sneed and Miss Sneed. They 're more important. They 've come for the dignity of the display, too." It happened that Mrs. Sneed and Miss Sneed were worth consideration, and as he was waiting, I tried to explain more fully.

Mrs. Sneed's trouble began with her father, also. He was a lawyer out of the North Shore of New Brunswick,

and he learned early that there is nothing so valuable as to make yourself invaluable to something, and that the easiest desirable thing to which you can make yourself invaluable is a government. So he undertook to make himself invaluable to an early government of Canada, and he succeeded beyond everybody's hope. A worried executive council considered him unfitted for a judgeship, so he was permitted to remain in politics until he attained a position of eminence, even the verge of the cabinet, and had been called a sneak to his face by the premier, who was a just man. Then he died, and his wife and children never regained their perspective. Their formality would daze a Garter king-at-arms. They had a regal dignity, and their English was the most beautiful English ever heard, and it was hereditary, and therefore hopeless. Their motto was: "We trust that nothing unseemly will occur." They were consistent people, and so were perfectly calculable. That is, if you took the trouble to press the button, they would do the rest, and you could be reasonably sure they would do it in a certain way. As the biologists put it, they would react consistently to specific stimuli. So, when everything else was dull, they were there for a joy and an entertainment to the people about them. But this is all very abstract and general.

Besides these things, Mrs. Sneed was a self-made diplomat. (These differ from the heaven-born sort.) Her system was simple. First, she assumed that you were a liar. Second, by using several sentences, each meaning the same thing, but with different words,— large words

misapplied,— she undertook to make you believe that she did not think you were a liar. Third, she smiled,— a suppressed smile,— doubtless intended for the admiring angels, and to indicate that that little point having been gained, she would now proceed to the next. At this stage you said to yourself very quietly, for fear it might be heard, " Does this fat woman with the elaborate language think for one second that her inmost appendix is not visible to the most untrained eye? " But there was nothing to do, except perhaps to throw something at her head, and she had not openly said anything to justify this, so probably would not understand. People of this sort are unduly protected by the conventions of civilization. Bricks would mar drawing-room furniture when often they are the only adequate form of repartee. Sometimes I think Mrs. Sneed was affected by finding out later that you had been telling the causeless truth, which was inconceivable, as she never did herself; so in the end this only worried her the more, because she knew in her soul there must be something beyond the length of her sounding-wire. To this kind of woman, or man, the naked truth is beyond understanding, and, if persisted in, will drive them to the extreme edge of lunacy. Which is a good thing to know, for if it comes that, instead of seeing them casually as notable phenomena and additions to the world's humor, you have to live with them and they become serious,— which God forbid! — it may be your only weapon. They may be as transparent as spring water, and your method may be superior to theirs. Don't trouble about it. Tell them the eternal

truth and they will break themselves on it utterly, trying to find where the catch comes in.

But if Mrs. Sneed was worth considering, Miss Sneed was more so. Her trouble was even more serious to herself. She started with her mother's traits, all of them, by heredity and infection, except that she was not fat; but of this there is always hope,— so she had a good start. Then she had peculiarities of her own. She began life on the wrong principle, and she worked it out toward the bitter end. She undertook from her early youth to select everything she wished in the world, and to get it by taking it. This seems a simple enough process, but unfortunately it conflicts with several natural laws, and these are very quiet, but highly dangerous. They are sometimes called the mills of God. So at the age of twenty-six years she was getting about half her normal sleep with the aid of a drug. The material things that she wished, such as rose-point insertions and feather boas at $66.98, she took, and Mr. Sneed paid for, though many times he did not wish to in the least. That was quite easy. But in the other things the law of compensation worked out with more accuracy. Miss Sneed undertook to get what she wanted by taking it, and the populace and the world and the universe, as ever, softly combined under Providence to see that she did not get it. And the combination was stronger than Miss Sneed. You never really get what you want in this way, though outsiders seldom know it, for Providence is very gentle with your vanity. So I have sometimes wondered why people who had used this method for a

long time and noted the results did not try the other and see what would happen. But they seldom do; and Miss Sneed also did not. She worked almost as quietly as the law of compensation, which, I imagine, is a most unusual attitude for a girl. She worked so quietly that at Havergal she was called The Image. Her clothes were perfect in speckless detail. Her manner was — elegant, and restrained beyond all describing, and still more restrained by her clothes, until her repression affected people's nerves, and they tried to vent their pain. In the end the women she met usually said they wished they could shake her, which is the ordinary, refined feminine way of expressing what a man means when he says he would like to break some one's specifically particularized neck. So Miss Sneed was not a favorite in earth or in heaven, and she knew it, and it made her very bitter. And so, to hide the bitterness, she invented a smile that I think was intended to indicate great enjoyment inside; and it was a success. It was a blighted smile of a sort that was calculated to irritate a marble bust, and it hurt people's feelings.

Now, this is a long description of what may not seem to be a very nice or a very natural character, but Miss Sneed was neither a very nice nor a very natural young woman. The little things she would actually do, such as leaving her grandmother — from Three Rivers — in a sleigh on Park Avenue in a northeast snow-storm for an hour while she made a call, or pirating wraps from half-clad girls on night expeditions, or lying to half-engaged girls with a view to prying loose young men, who were

always at a premium, were beyond human belief. If it were conventional and would serve any little end of hers, she would doubtless have sold the same grandmother to the Arabs, or done an apparent kindness to a stranger, though I have no proof of either of these things. In any case I tried to make it all clear to the pianist, who was still regarding the white schooner with an unfavorable eye.

"Now, can you tell me," he said, "why people like that are allowed to go on? Why does n't something explode and disarrange their habits — remake 'em?"

I replied that I did n't know, but I thought it was because of their nerve,— like Napoleon Bonaparte again, — so that other people took it all for granted. I stated further that I thought it was a law, like the law of gravitation.

"Yes," he said; "but I don't believe in any law of gravitation. If you get out of a second-story window, it 's the natural thing for you to fall down and break your neck. You don't need any law of gravitation. A lot of these chaps are running round making laws about things that are working all right, anyway. I don't believe in any law of gravitation, and I don't believe in your Mrs. and Miss Sneed, or whatever you call 'em. Freddy wants to be taken aboard to see 'em at once; and they 'd better be good, or there 's going to be trouble. I don't care whether I ever catch a codfish or not."

Mr. Simpson smiled.

"You 're a sort of automatic evangelist, ain't y'!" he commented.

"Never you mind," said the pianist. "May be I 'm the Angel Gabriel: but I know Providence never brought me from Philadelphia for nothing."

The schooner-yacht, as stately as a girl in her teens, had been approaching in broad arcs to correspond with the curves of that grass-bounded channel, and now she came to rest, while the motor tender, called in and silent, permitted the broken reflections to gather themselves together into one glorious picture. A small-fluked anchor, cast loose by a person in white, went overboard with a sonorous outpouring of chain, and I remember thinking, from three hundred feet away, that it looked inadequate for a ninety-foot schooner. As she swung, Mr. Simpson sang softly from the rail:

"See the man in the gold hat an' white pants about to fire the brass cannon!" Then to Mr. Anderson, as the roar died away among the islands: "Go an' pull down the flag, y' poacher! All right! Pull it up again, can't y'? There 's nobody dead. Now run down an' slip into another suit of the boss's pajamas, and come up and stand beside me an' look silly like a Swedish deckhand. We want to put on some style, too."

"Mr. Sneed is the little man with the De Villar y Villar, Mrs. Sneed is the fat woman fitted into the wicker chair, and Miss Sneed is the patent snob with the baby hat?" inquired the pianist.

"Correct!" I said. "And the other two I do not recognize from here. They 're young —"

"And unmarried," he said. "They look strained

and unsatisfied, and I think there 's war of some kind. I 've got a tingly feeling in my solar plexus."

I dropped below to change from overalls that smelled of herring to something in which I could make a formal call, and while my head was plunged in a basin, he danced in, dressed in a twisted towel, smote my shoulder with an iron hand, and said, " 'Sh ! " In through the open port came the sound of a piano, operated freely by one who knew no fear, and the sacrifice was Schumann's " Nachtstück in F Major." We listened through certain additions and variations by the artist until the pianist spoke :

" That is a man, and he also would sell his grandmother to — a medical school. This plot is coming on very nicely, though I don't see what it means. But it 's evident I was not brought from Philadelphia for nothing. You watch ! "

As I was no more fully enlightened, I watched. And the complications unassumingly gathered themselves together.

Looking backward, it is evident that each least thing that happened from that moment had some special significance in heralding the oncoming of the unforeseen end, though the end involved no great throes — only the readjustment of certain relations that were unfitting and the softening of certain little crudenesses. As to the steps involved, with their beautiful logical sequence, we of course, being human, failed to see them at all ; though I imagine that the pianist, always more or less inspired,

saw further than I. But it is nice to fit them all together afterward and see how Providence works, even when making minor adjustments.

For instance, I remember that at that moment Mr. Anderson, from above, announced that the *Campana* was going down the gulf, and as I looked through the port at the spars, far apart, and the lean, red funnel, moving beyond the beaches, Mr. Simpson laughed and pointed out that a cloud no bigger than a man's hand lay on the northern horizon. (This is one of those local jests that you would understand if you had lived for some years on the southern bight of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, though I am not so sure it is much of a jest after all.)

Still, when I went on deck, I could see no reason why a wisp of gray scud should move across the breathless sky at noon, followed by another, and this by still others; nor why these, in the heart of a supernal calm, should fashion themselves into ropes and sprays that seemed to proceed from somewhere high up in the northeast, like water drifting from a fire-nozzle. Also, I failed to see why something unseen should breathe coldly on the back of my neck when I stood in the shade of the deck-house in midsummer.

"Will you listen to the crickets singing ashore!" Mr. Anderson said in a subdued voice. The *Gloria's* piano had ceased, and above the blare of what might be all the crickets in the world we could hear a dog barking, very far up-harbor, the groaning of Indian Rocks' buoy, twenty good miles away, and not one other sound.

Then we called. We climbed up by white-painted man-ropes until we stood on holystoned planks. We were received with majesty by Mrs. Sneed in a great many things of which I remember only a white feather ruff and the white powder on her pink neck and purple nose; and by Miss Sneed, two feet, six inches to the left and nine inches to the rear, also with powder on her nose, who smiled graciously, because we wore trousers. Now powder does not comport with the eternal sea, and, besides, Miss Sneed was clad in chiffon, and as we were presented to the others, with full usage, she sneered. And the reason was instantly apparent. There was Mr. Sneed, who made a thin-lipped, mirthless joke; there was the other man, who was young and pale and impressive; and there was, I think, one of the most radiantly beautiful girls I have ever seen in my life. The other man's name was L. Geoffrey Spiers,— Spiers being pronounced like the steeples of cathedrals,— and the girl's name was Hilda Roche.

Though I had never met Mr. Spiers I had known of him before — not heard of him, but known of him. Without question he had an ambition, and I think it was to excel all other people in all other things except, perhaps, his own business. I had heard that his specialty was other men's wives; but this was hearsay, and hearsay is invariably unjust. I have passed modestly above his horizon in several cities several times since that day,— and night,— but in all these times I have heard only one description of him that was at all suggestive. These complex natures are difficult to describe.

It was by a worldly woman who was speaking of some one else altogether, and it was very impressionistic at best. She said: "He was a sort of imitation of Geoffrey Spiers, without half as much excuse for being," which seemed to lead to the conclusion that Mr. Spiers needed an excuse for being what he was. But you will have to puzzle it out for yourself. In any case, he affected the pianist for the worse at once, for the pianist was a man of great discernment.

But the girl was magnificent. She was a big girl, and she was twenty,— that is, six infinite years younger than Miss Sneed,— but in poised wisdom her age was a thousand years, and it looked out through her great, gorgeous, dark-blue eyes, to the extinction of all human argument, as was abundantly proved later. She was dressed in some sort of white corded stuff, and she had a lavender border to her handkerchief. Her teeth were perfect. Her lips were almost over-full, and pouted with her straightforwardness, and were utterly alluring. Her color was as warm and as even as the afterglow in August, and she stood up in her insolent beauty, and she captivated the pianist and me with one all-ravishing smile. Or, in any case, she captivated me, and I saw the pianist drop his eyes and look covertly in my direction, so I knew his armor-plated vitals had been reached, and miraculously held my expression until his gaze shifted back. It was above all and beyond all question that she was as clean and unspoiled as summer sunlight. They are so very, very rare. It could only be blood, a most fortunate training, and the mercy of Di-

vine Providence. So, while we were led, and Mr. Sneed impressed that the whole ornate interior of that ship was San Domingo mahogany, tiger-back grain, and Mrs. Sneed thumbed lockers with leaded-glass fronts, I saddened down at the thought of the things that beautiful thing, with her bravery and light-heartedness, had yet to meet in this amazing world.

Then, within three minutes, something happened. It was a little thing in itself. Disregarding the San Domingo mahogany, I had been watching those great, intent, considering eyes; and they had been watching me, and the pianist (who you would never suspect of being a diplomat), and Miss Sneed, attentive as a tiger cub against the upholstery, and Mrs. Sneed taking in the pianist with profound suspicion, and Mr. Sneed talking beautifully. They were laughing eyes that noted and weighed each little thing as they went, and they drew your very heart. But at the end of every round they wandered back and rested on Mr. Geoffrey Spiers, where they went altogether off their guard. And Mr. Spiers smoked, unaware of the honor, thereby showing his sophistication. And I think the short hairs on the back of Miss Sneed's neck stood up in her polished wrath. Three separate times I saw this silent tragedy, and the pianist, as far as I could make out, saw nothing whatever, not even Mr. Sneed, but proceeded in a dense fog, as was his habit when in thought, until Mrs. Sneed commented aside and in a devious way to me and I said that he was a very nice young man, but tired with the cares of business. In some

mysterious fashion I engineered him back to the *Rorqual* without an explosion, and then he broke out:

"Now, what does your woolly mistake-box make of that — why did the Lord put 'em all together? Tell me, do you suppose you could invent a ship-load like that if you worked all your life?" Mr. Simpson and Mr. Anderson drew up in silence, and to the former he explained in full. Mr. and Mrs. Sneed he referred to as Doukhobors, intending to be discourteous. "Then," he said, selecting the Havergal term, "there is a female image —"

"*Kee-wah-gush-ta-kum-kang-kang-ge-wuk*," interrupted Mr. Simpson. "I been studyin' 'em through the stereoscopic binocular."

"Translate!" ordered the pianist.

"Lily - that - is - the - same - shape - all - the - way - up - and - down."

"Exactly. And, besides, there's a half-breed in full-bred clothes, and the Queen of Sheba, only a nicer girl and prettier. And this is the lunacy of the distribution."— He demonstrated on the side of the deck-house as on a blackboard —"The image wants the half-breed, and the half-breed wants the Queen of Sheba — like everybody else, including me. That is all right. But the Queen of Sheba is really affected by the half-breed. Same sort of thing. She knows pretty nearly everything worth knowing in the world, but she does n't happen to notice that he 's a shell-brass imitation. This is one of those regrettable but unavoidable occasions where this highly organized universe misses an explo-

sion — mosquito in the gasolene or something I don't understand. Now, I knew I was brought here for something, and, you see, the reason is made clear. I am going to make this business into what you call a temporary indisposition. You watch. I don't know how yet, and we may have to neglect you a little, Henry, while we invade Society; but don't you care. This cod-fishing expedition is postponed." Mr. Simpson rejoined that he did not care so long as his personal comfort was not interfered with, and Mr. Anderson smiled in blessed anticipation. The pianist, clouded in thought, went below, and I followed in curiosity on an unguessable trail that led through the galley, where he selected a bag that had contained Scotch anthracite, and on to the utmost recesses of the lazaret, in the tar-steeped darkness of which I saw him dropping things into the bag, notably marline, a ball of candle-wick, and a pair of very old and moldy sea-boots. From murmuring he rose into explanation.

"Just the same as the salmon-trip — or almost anything else on earth," he said. "First, Freddy will make one small, pink atmosphere. Then he will get into the middle of it, like a little duckling in a puddle, and flap his wings and quack for the purpose of drawing attention to himself and away from that sardine. The rest is easy: *he 'll* probably do it himself. But it goes to show that these yachting trips are highly dangerous: the immeasurable sea and the eternal stars, and before you know it you 've made an error in judgment."

"Yes," I said; "but what are you going to do?"

"How should I know? Attend to any little details that are lying about, and then pray. If you think Providence 'll neglect any one bent on an errand of mercy like this, your faith needs to be re-felted. If you mean, What am I living for? I 'll tell you. Your Miss Sneed wants your Mr. Spiers, and I 'd hate to see her disappointed. I 'm the Adjusting Angel, and I 'm going to see that she gets him. There 'll be another wedding at St. George's, and then let 'em fight it out for themselves, an' the Lord have mercy on their souls!"

When we reached the deck, he watched the *Gloria* party till a tinkly tea-bell sounded, and they solemnly went down to lunch, when he drew the dinghy alongside, cast in the bag, and a clam-shovel, and went silently away toward the outmost line of beaches, where we saw him excavating on a sand point while we ate.

"Barrin' the natural processes, such as fermentation an' that sort of thing," said Mr. Simpson, "d' you know any way in the world of tellin' what 's goin' on inside him?"

I said I did not. All we knew was that he came back in a short half-hour, rowing wide and strong over the sticky calm and wearing a pleased smile, and to all questions replied that he had been making arrangements so that the tide might come in. So Mr. Simpson gave it up, and went to sleep in the pilot-house, and Mr. Anderson, whose bent was to catch any kind of fish in any way that seemed to him best calculated to compass this desirable end, lowered machine after machine into the waters of that harbor and was happy.

In early afternoon, under a steadily darkening sky, the *Gloria's* party came to inspect the *Rorqual.* Mr. Sneed said that these gasolene boats were unreliable, and that he disliked the smell of oil from the engine-room. Both of which remarks showed criminal ignorance of the ninety-foot cruiser of to-day, beside being designed to hurt the owner's feelings. Miss Sneed spoke of the fishermen in the pinkies as "poor creatures," and Mrs. Sneed, speaking aloud, referred to Mr. Simpson and Mr. Anderson as our "men," which caused those untidy persons to go up to the verge of apoplexy, to say nothing of the pianist and me. I mention these things because of the exceeding irony of the application somewhat later.

Then, after Miss Hilda Roche had said that she thought the *Rorqual* was "perfectly dandy," and that she liked power-yachts better than sailing-yachts, anyway, which resulted in extreme low pressure, accompanied by exceptional disturbances from Mrs. Sneed's direction, Mr. Kimborough and I lowered the *Rorqual's* motor-tender, the *Porpoise* of other days, and took that party on an exploring expedition among the islands. All this while it impressed me that something weighed heavily on the pianist's mind.

The entire gulf had gone gray, and was as silent as the gulf between the stars, and beyond the far horizon the smoke of each steamer stood up like a royal palm. We showed them thirty-foot kelp, streaming from green-lighted, weed-hung ledges in the deep water outside; our herring nets hanging between this world and the

mysteries below; tide-worn beaches, with grass breathless-still, that hid young terns; and, on one island, seven wells in line, walled with oak, of which no living man knew the origin.

But the pianist modestly produced a chart, and I began to foresee extensive happenings. It was a time-worn document, and it dealt with a time-worn subject; namely, Captain William Kidd and buried treasure. He explained that he had purchased it from an Indian, who had found it under a flat stone. Hearing me speak of the seven wells, he had brought it — as a matter of curiosity. The seven wells were there, also a spruce-tree, which was miraculously absent, also a gap in Prince Edward Island, which was still there, though somewhat distorted by the mirage. It was all very remarkable. With my pocket compass (he transfixed me with his eye) and with the aid of two sticks held tolerantly in a bunch of beach-grass by Mr. Sneed and Mr. Spiers, who, I could see, were beginning to regard him as a notable curiosity, he moved about these gentlemen for a long time, sometimes on his hands and knees, and sometimes passaging sidewise on his toes, while they followed him with amazed heads until at last he established ranges, which, he demonstrated, led to a certain sand island, at a spot that seemed to me to coincide with the place I had seen him digging an hour and a half before; but I was dumb. Mr. Sneed chuckled in the wisdom that is bred of riches, Mr. Spiers smiled in the wisdom that is bred of the conquest of little smart sets in half-size cities, Mrs. and Miss Sneed

said "How interesting!" and smiled a cryptic smile at each other, and Miss Roche said that it was perfectly gorgeous, and that we would go and see what we could find.

We went, and as we drew near to that sand point I could make out two figures in rigid and inquiring attitudes on the far-away *Rorqual*. I felt a little dubious myself. Mr. Simpson afterward stated that when we landed he and Mr. Anderson looked with confidence to seeing that island blow up in the manner of Krakatua, and, as a result, to their having "beautiful sunsets all the rest of the fall." But we landed in silence and in peace. With a pliant and genial suavity the pianist set us each in a certain station among sand-dunes, and besought us to stand still, while he moved about with his blessed chart, taking sights across the glassy gulf until he had his district tramped up like a moose-yard. Then, with one eye closed, and solemnly backing away from a lath held uneasily by Mrs. Sneed, he said we should have to "dig here," and went away for one of the *Porpoise's* ornamental oars. And he dug.

In all this vale of tears there is not a sane and healthy man who can view a real treasure hunt without emotion. He recognized this piece of crude psychology at its true worth. He dug with great earnestness for two minutes, at the end of which time Mr. Sneed and Mr. Spiers became infected, forgot themselves, brought the other oar, and part of a jetsam lobster buoy, and dug feverishly. So I dug, too; and Mrs. Sneed and Miss Sneed and Miss Hilda Roche stood round in one

isosceles triangle and stared at the ever-new bottom of that hole. Within four laborious minutes we struck wood — scarred wood that sounded hollow. Mr. Sneed and Mr. Spiers paused long enough to regard each other with amazement and the pianist, who continued to dig, with awe. Then they fell to work as terriers that seek a woodchuck.

"Oak!" grunted Mr. Kimborough, with sand in his hair. The wood was softwood of some sort, and was chafed and scored along its grain, and bleached with the searching bleach of the sea; and as we uncovered it, laboring in sweat, it took on the astounding form of a long box, with curved top and curved sides, like nothing so much as a rough and gigantic coffin. At this point Mr. Sneed and Mr. Spiers stopped to marvel and to breathe; but the pianist, toiling without ceasing, said that the tide was rising and urged great haste, while Mrs. Sneed and Miss Sneed had passed beyond all expression, and Miss Roche danced with excitement on the edge of the pit. So the two gentlemen went at it again, wrestling with the patiently descending sand, until their sweat mingled with the sand on their pink cheeks, and altered their gritty countenances so that their dignity dissolved away. But they helped to uncover that casket. Mr. Simpson said that through the glass it looked like a moving-picture he had seen of three ladies standing on the edge of a geyser.

We worked powerfully down along one side; we worked furiously up along the other; and as we drew near to what might be one end, we found the wood

broken through, as though by violence. Two hard-breathing sweeps of Mr. Sneed's oar cleared the way nicely and laid bare one quiet but suggestive booted foot that protruded from the opening. Mr. Sneed fell back as if bitten, and Mr. Spiers froze in his last attitude. From above there came two muffled shrieks and a gasp of amazement. With a prettily delivered twist of his oar the pianist removed more sand, and another foot came to light. The two lay with toes turned up, side by side, as the toes of a man at rest. Mr. Kimborough paused, unperturbed, and gazed in saddened contemplation. Then he removed his cap.

"Gentlemen," he said softly, "without question we are in the presence of the illustrious dead." Nothing but superb acting could have carried this outrageous situation in white daylight, but he did. Then, as suddenly, he reverted to practical considerations.

"Come on; we'll clear away the other end." The men of the *Gloria* came on with some reluctance, and disclosed, flowing through a crack, what appeared to be thinnish, white hair and a short piece of rusty chain. It struck me that both were in an excellent state of preservation, considering that they had come down the centuries, but little discrepancies like these are not noted in times of popular excitement. The pianist seized the chain and jerked, but nothing moved.

"Well, lend a hand," he said, addressing Mr. Spiers.

Mr. Spiers paused. We looked, and he was white to the collar, and the hand he lent was sensibly trembling. The entire Sneed family were ossified with open hor-

ror, and Miss Roche was thralled in burning curiosity. Then together we heaved. First the sand stirred, then the whole structure rose up and turned over in our hands. It would have been a very large coffin, but it was not. It was a very small boat, half dory, half flat, and it contained a pair of moldy sea-boots, which seemed familiar, a little hank of bedraggled and combed-out candle-wick, and a good deal of sand, and that was all.

The notable feature, after this disclosure, was silence. The portentous silence that lay on the whole great Gulf of St. Lawrence on that day flowed in and swallowed up the astounded group that hung on the edge of the grass on that outer beach. After this silence had endured for probably ten painful seconds, it was broken by a ripple, and Mr. Kimborough raised his disappointed eyes to the edge of the crater in time to see Miss Hilda Roche sit down and roll out of sight in a hurricane of unladylike laughter. But his expression changed no more than the outline of the eternal hills, except that he was visibly surprised and puzzled.

"Funny thing, is n't it," he said in an abstracted voice, "that we should find *that* just where those ranges crossed!"

Mr. Sneed said it was, very, and Mrs. Sneed regarded his earnest and troubled face with darkening suspicion. As for Miss Sneed and Mr. Spiers, they were beyond all speech. We found Miss Roche seated on the sand beside a great roll of dry eel-grass, and her shining eyes were filled with tears, and there were tears on her cheeks, for she had a highly developed sense of humor.

Mrs. Sneed was the first of that family to recover poise, and looked down on the groveling Miss Roche with an austere and flaming eye.

"Hilda," she said, "what is the trouble?" But there was no trouble, except that Miss Roche was not in a condition to say so. On the other hand, there was every sign of joy; so much that that young lady rolled over and sobbed tears into the thirsty sands, until Miss Sneed glared green fire, like a bay lynx, and Mrs. Sneed strode away toward the sea and the *Rorqual's* tender. At this painful stage I broke down also, and made inefficient excuses to Mr. Sneed; but the pianist kept that wonderful countenance in sadness and failed to see any joke whatever. He said he would take the sea-boots back to the *Rorqual* as a souvenir, and in passing whispered to me that he thought the ice was slightly scarred.

For two miles across the calm he marveled continuously to Mrs. Sneed, until I think that fat and suspicious person was assured that he was an earnest seeker after buried treasure and a disappointed man. Miss Sneed divided her strained attention between his recital and Mr. Spiers, who was trying to explain to Miss Roche how fully the humor of the situation had struck him. But it was a weary effort, and was rendered still more sad by Miss Roche's not being able to see it. Between bursts of merriment that congested Mrs. and Miss Sneed into volcanic rage, she said that his, Mr. Spiers's, expression was the overcoming picture of the whole exhibition, that he went "the prettiest, creamy white," and would n't he do it again, just for fun. Throughout

this ragging, Mr. Spiers tried to smile, but I don't think I ever saw a man look more uncomfortable. At the *Gloria's* gangway she said she forgave him (Miss Sneed was pale with wrath) and thanked us for the jolliest time. Besides, would n't we come to dinner, and Mr. Spiers would play for us afterward. Mr. and Mrs. Sneed, from the deck, indorsed this invitation, but without warmth, and the pianist said we would. We went back to the *Rorqual* to get rid of some of the sand.

"You 're a fully developed lunatic," I remarked.

"Exactly," he said. "But many times a little jest may suffice when the councils of kings would be of none effect. We 've made a first-class start; but she was too hard on him. After supper she 'll be nice to him, and you and I may not be in favor for a little. Then — I don't know what. We 'll wait and see. She 's a nice sort of girl, is n't she!" She was, beyond question; and though this was brief praise it was beyond anything I had ever heard from him.

I tried to tell the story justly to Mr. Simpson and Mr. Anderson, but I know I lost much of the color. However, they lay on the transoms in the dining-saloon with their knees drawn up and said that they were satisfied.

When I came up again, newly washed, I found Mr. Anderson alone, considering the sky; and it was certainly worth consideration.

"Did you ever see anything like that in your life?" he said.

I said truthfully that I never did. It had built

up, bank by indrawn bank, through the long afternoon, and it lay unbroken from the darkened zenith outward and down beyond the uttermost horizon, a lead-gray sea of scud, low-hung, twisted, torn, frothed, and as deathly still as the gulf below. At the same time Mr. Simpson appeared from the pilot-house, bearing the barometer, and shaking it as he came.

"I guess this machine's run down," he said. "Look!" It said 28.85. "D' y' think it's broke?" I examined that astonishing instrument, and it appeared to be in full working order. "Then the *Campana's* pumps must be performin' all right this time: we 're likely to have a shower."

Now, North Harbour has a bottom of liquid mud wind-rowed with the curse of all anchored fishermen, dead eel-grass, and is altogether one of the worst holding-grounds on the North Atlantic. But whatever might come, I had no fear, for the *Rorqual* had two fifty-horse-power engines to fall back on: and, more especially, she had one 300- and one 400-pound stockless anchor that would have held her through the Samoan hurricane. Once in her earlier youth the *Rorqual* had had a certain experience such as grays your hair at the time and you laugh at afterward. But the lesson had been taken deeply to heart; and her present ground-tackle was the delight and derision of summer yachtsmen. So we took the gig and went tranquilly to the *Gloria's* dinner-party.

It was fully as the pianist had prophesied. Mr. Spiers had developed what appeared to be a wounded

nature, and sat close to Miss Roche on a transom in the saloon. The young lady's heart had visibly gone out in sympathy, and it was only by forced and adroit stages that Mr. Kimborough got near enough to join in. But he did, and I was left to soothe Miss Sneed, which was no ordinary task. She spoke in all respects like an absent-minded phonograph.

"Yes," I said,— I counted, and this was the eighth effort,—"light winds in summer, as a rule. You see, Northumberland Strait is probably the only place on either Atlantic or Pacific coast where there is no fog, ever, so you can always see your lights: so we call it one of the greatest cruising grounds in the world." Miss Sneed said, "Really!" and ground a silk-clad cushion under her heel.

"No, I don't." This was from the pianist beyond, on another subject, and we seemed to agree to listen.

"But," said Mr. Spiers, "you see a man or a woman with an artistic temperament, with an insight into the beauties of the world that enables him to interpret them to the ordinary man, lives more fully than other people. Won't you admit that he should be put on a higher plane, and forgiven a great many things?" Mr. Kimborough's guarded eyes rested a moment on me in passing.

"No, I won't!" he said. "First, I don't know what an artistic temperament is. I've seen quite a few temperaments that were advertised as that, but they looked to me like hysteria — getting your nerves tired and letting yourself go to seed in some particular direction for the sake of the rest and the change. The pa-

tients were n't very strong in the head. Intermittent lunacy! I don't see why you should be able to interpret the beauties of nature for what you call the ordinary man just because you 're crazy along some line or other. Anyway, you can't interpret the beauties of this world for anybody: the Lord can make you feel those things better than any half-baked maniac. All these fellows that paint pictures and write books and run round playing the fiddle can do is to make you remember all at once a lot of the best things you 've seen and been. Now, I think that 's a fine business; but you can't do that with artistic temperament. When an army doctor 's fighting it out with a couple of hundred wounded men on a battlefield, that 's a fine business, too. But his artistic temperament does n't help him much: it 's the work he 's done before. D' y' know, excepting praying, I don't know anything that helps you much but the work you 've done before. Here 's the whole business. If you 've come from a stock that 's given you nervous energy enough to stand up and live your life, and you 're reasonably decent, and you 've got will enough to wait while you 're doing the work, you 'll probably be able to do some things almost as they should be done — the way they 'll be done in heaven. That 's what the geniuses do, and that 's what the other fellows 'll walk miles to see, because it makes 'em feel better inside. But you 'll have to work, you know, an hour over the turn of a word, or a day to find how much light can fall beside an apostle's foot. That 's the way they make classics. It 's no use trying to tell the others

about the work: they would n't understand, or, if you did get them to understand, they would n't believe you, so it would be a waste of time. All you need is the health and the chance to go ahead all the time you 're properly awake, and to sleep all the time between, and you 'll leave the artistic temperaments slopping along so far behind they 'll look like wilted pansies. And when you do get it right in the end, they 'll join in with the happy chorus and say it 's a gift, a special dispensation from Heaven. That 's my idea of interpreting things."

There was a gusty fluency about these dogmas that was impressive. Whether they naturally struck Mr. Spiers's soft spots, or whether it never occurred to him that any one could differ from his opinions so fully and so easily, I do not know; but he seemed displeased, as did Miss Sneed.

" Your friend is a curious person! " said that young woman, tensely, to me. Miss Hilda Roche's eyes rested on Mr. Kimborough's grave and inscrutable face.

" I think you 're quite right," she said, " and it makes things so much simpler. It would n't be fair if the workers only got their success by — work, and the others got theirs by intuition; and everything 's fair in the end, is n't it! My goodness! but I 'm neglecting mine. I 'm knitting a sweater for Tim — that 's my kid brother." This last to me, as her brown hands went down into a locker for it, and began to swing large wooden needles. " Pick up Grandma's ball," she said briskly to Miss Sneed, who snorted as that furry animal

came to rest beside her foot; but she obeyed. Mrs. Sneed also snorted, and Mr. Spiers, in apparent heat, said it was an "original creed."

Then we went to dinner, and it was a stately meal. I sat beside Miss Roche and gathered, in discreet interludes, that she had been asked on that cruise because Miss Sneed wanted to visit her in the winter,— which would not occur,— and that she had come because she loved boats and had never been yachting on salt water, and because she did not particularly know the Sneeds. With the light in her great eyes she told me further that Mr. Spiers was very clever at finance and that he had been awfully nice. Where, having no suitable reply at hand, I kept silent.

And after dinner Mr. Spiers, again under the guidance of Providence and in the midst of cigarette smoke, worked toward the piano and his own destruction, and Mrs. Sneed egged him on with great pride and with sidelong glances at us. It was uproariously evident that this was intended to be an exhibition.

Still, mistrusting the barometer, I slipped on deck for a moment, and stepped from the companion-hatch full into the middle of October. The picture of the gray gulf had been carelessly washed out by a chilled and over-early twilight, and the lightest *wisp* of very soft rain sifted on the cockpit-awning. Besides the *Gloria's* bulk and her towering spars, there remained in all the world three things: the uncertain loom of the wooded and rocky bank to the southward, to starboard a somber shadow that was the nearest of the pinkies, and

to port the trails of the *Rorqual's* lights shaking across the calm; for there came also the least breath of air drifting in over the unseen islands from the outer gulf. I found the captain forward, already in oilskins, staring under the *Gloria's* riding-light into the mysterious Northeast.

"What do you think of it?" I said.

"I think there 's goin' to be big trouble — an' me an' the cook left aboard. He"— with a profane inclination toward the saloon —"sent the other four to Leith with the *Now-an'-then*" (I inferred this meant the motor-boat) "to get full to-night an' bring a little lettuce an' ice out in the morning."

"How does she lie at anchor?"

"Like nothin' you ever saw. Range? Why, man, she goes round an' round it like a bull-calf round a picket. But it 's started to rain, and we 'll pray that 's all it 'll be — 28.80 in July!" he murmured as I left. That portentous glass was vexing his soul also.

Below, Mr. Spiers had attained to the piano-stool and was visibly improvising a prelude. That prelude contained brief portions of the overture to "Semiramide" — *ritenuto;* Handel's Largo — *allegretto;* a few rough impressions of Madame Chaminade; a careless handful of sad and Oriental minor chords culled from the extensive works of P. Tschaikovsky; and a hazy, draped figure of San Toy and the memorable year 1900. In any case, it showed a large acquaintance with music.

I slid in beside Miss Roche. On the other side was Mr. F. B. Kimborough, and the expression of the Man

with the Iron Mask would have been bright and vivacious beside his. It was no lack of interest, only hopeful ignorance. Have you ever watched an up-country lawyer on an admiralty case trying, with an open-scale chart, to work a grounded ship into a plowed field? In the midst of his sermon on artistic temperaments I think Mrs. Sneed was disquieted, but now she might search that childlike face and be reassured. While Mr. Spiers considered, he said earnestly that it was the best yacht piano he had ever heard (which the Sneeds smiled upon as a piece of unnecessary boasting), and as that gentleman returned to work he fell once more into a deferential silence.

Now, from the opening of Mr. Spiers's performance it was evident that he valued at its full the emotional effect music and a little mystery might have on impressionable ladies of twenty. So he supplied as much sheer music and as much mystery as he was able. He played a passage that came from somewhere in Schumann's "Kreisleriana" (he had assuredly been taught it in class), then Tschaikovsky's "Troïka en Traineaux," then the Humoresque in G. Inbred fatalism does not live in the air of eastern Canada. The steady recurring Oriental phrasing and the bland freedom from all ambition they neither sympathized with nor understood. Hence the mystery and the awed silence of the Sneed family: but the young lady with the intent blue eyes leaned forward and considered.

"Do you know much about music?" I asked in a pause.

"Not a thing in the world," she said.

Mr. Spiers proceeded into the heart of a silky nocturne, and the surroundings began to tell — billowy green upholstery against the San Domingo mahogany; and the coffee had been undeniably good. I think even Miss Sneed relaxed a little. The nocturne had been played before by many young ladies at many graduating recitals and raised no great heat. It was not that Mr. Spiers did it badly, but there was very little to do. He was gracefully leading up. Here he played a sonata that I did not know, but it struck me that there must be something seriously wrong with it. However, I waited, and uselessly searched Mr. Kimborough's half-hidden face. It was set like a plaster cast of Innocence, and I thought, "How much longer may this miracle continue to be?"

Mr. Sneed was smoking in the tolerant belief that the appreciation of what they called classical music was a painful but inexpensive pose — at least, so I took it; Mrs. Sneed was in gracious possession of a wizard by which we were being overpowered, which is the sum of social success; Miss Sneed was stiffened against the cushions, watching the situation like a cat; and Mr. Spiers went forward into Chopin's A♭ Major Ballade and stepped cheerfully out of his depth. There are things harder to play than the A♭ Major Ballade, many things, but to interpret with any degree of decency there may not be a dozen harder in the world. It may be made into a meaningless and irrelevant jumble, and to take out of it quite all there is in it needs

a musician of the very first rank. And they know it, and so you find it on their programs in the place of greater music.

Within the first thirty bars he broke down a little, and later a little more; but he knew that we would never know, so he went on freely and outraged that ingenious composition. It was the artistic temperament — pure inspiration — turned loose; but it brought up the color in Miss Roche's brown cheeks. Toward the ringing end of it he fell over himself and paused visibly, but endeavored still, laboring, to make us believe it was all written.

"What did he do?" the girl asked Mr. Kimborough in the least whisper as he finished.

"Caught a crab, I think," said that worthy. Mr. Spiers paused with one hand above the keyboard and looked at him in saddened reproach before he forged into the next classic.

"What is that?" demanded the girl in the early stages.

"Rubinstein's Study on the Wrong Notes," informed Mr. Kimborough, softly, and I saw the littlest smile flicker for an instant. The girl stared at him wide-eyed.

"You're a mean sneak!" she whispered when the music stopped.

"How?"

"I believe you've played the piano ever since you were a little boy. I don't believe you can do anything else."

"I 'm a bird on a treasure-hunt," he said smoothly. And before she could warn Mr. Spiers that gentleman dropped his hands on the four lower E♭'s and fell into — the A♭ Major Polonaise. Even then she rose, but collapsed under a stare from Mrs. Sneed. Mr. Kimborough stiffened and shifted his feet. His repressed eye sought mine and indicated great strain.

There is not necessarily any impropriety in not being able to do a thing; but it is highly improper to pretend you can do it better than an archangel when you are reasonably sure the people about you will not know the difference. Besides, it is dangerous: for the theory of probability may fail you, and some one may be present. Or, if not, it is a crime, for it lowers the people's conceptions of archangels. Or, worse still, if they do not consider the archangel at all, it gives them a poor idea of a classic, and a classic is much more sacred than an archangel, for it is the best work of a man and will affect all men for all time, and an archangel is only a functionary.

Now, it would be painful, and, more important, it would be useless, to tell truly how Mr. Geoffrey Spiers played the A♭ Major Polonaise; for, after all, it has lifted up very many human hearts for very many years. The first notes, those E♭'s, he smote viciously. The second of those little runs in thirds, ye pianists, he blurred; the third little run he sketched; the fourth he missed, while the troubled audience considered what it might be about. He fell feverishly on that slowing rhythm that leads it all up to the dominant and steadies it all down

to the majestic polonaise time, and before he had attained to the first version of the main theme that great polonaise took him by the neck and led him away. And it used him with extreme cruelty. Under the mighty discipline his nerve forsook him, he passed out from under his own control, and his speed increased until he went away like a brakeless automobile on a twenty per cent grade. On that bellowing three-octave run from A up to B♭ he never struck the critical top note once. He struck A; he struck B; he even struck C (when I saw Mr. Kimborough's neck grow red), and once he struck the wood of the piano. In the midst of the movement in E his left wrist must have fainted, for he played largely with his right till it recovered, which amazingly marred the effect. Toward the last he rocked on his stool and sweat freely, and in the extreme thundering finish he depressed within certain seconds, I think, more notes that had no harmonic relation to one another than I had ever heard before. In a reminiscent conference, long after, Mr. Simpson said he was not a judge of music, but it sounded aboard the *Rorqual* as if an electric piano-player had short-circuited.

Mr. Spiers left the Sneed family patently bewildered, but impressed beyond English words, and in the succeeding silence he moved modestly to another seat. Miss Roche was rose pink.

It was Miss Sneed's automatic voice that broke through.

"Thank you so much: that was beautiful!" she said. "Do you play?" I recovered to find that this last was

addressed to me, and managed to say quite decently that I did not.

"Do you?" to Mr. Kimborough.

"I do," he said.

"Oh, won't you play — that is — if you don't mind playing after Mr. Spiers."

"Yes," urged Mr. Spiers, to be encouraging, "do!"

"I will," said the pianist. It had the full-measured intonation of the response in the marriage service. The cryptic smile flickered between Mrs. and Miss Sneed, and Mr. Kimborough arose as a wooden man.

For you to comprehend this next scene in all its graded clarity, it is necessary to understand that in that instant his mood changed to the mood of exaltation in which I said I had seen him do wonderful things. He put on the unseen mantle of the prophet and was detached from all minor ends. It was a time when you heard small things, like the drip of water off the trunk-deck.

"Madam," he said, with the least inclination toward the amused Mrs. Sneed, "your piano is out of tune. May I tune it?" and from his hip pocket he untangled a full-sized professional tuning-key that I knew lived ordinarily with his shaving-gear and pajamas. The smiles faded as fades the sun under the edge of a rising thunder-cloud, and in their stead came signs of great amazement.

"Why, certainly — of course — yes, Mr. Kimborough," she said as soon as she was able. The two faces reddened up like blowing peonies, Mr. Sneed's traveling

cigar stood still, Miss Roche gazed at her shoes, and Mr. Spiers smiled a loose-lipped, foolish smile. The pianist saw none of these things, and I watched the pianist. He opened up the top of the piano, he reached into inaccessible places, and the front came off, and at the same time the cover, in his other hand. From the obscurity below proceeded a click and the lower front panel fell forward against his knees. All these were piled on the carpet. Then, with the deft assurance of a steam-fitter, he whirled off four thumb-nuts, and the entire action came out and stood on its end, where small but seemingly important parts of it were jiggled familiarly, and three little springs were bent into place. Then he lifted up that glittering complication, threw it back, screwed it home, and proceeded to tune the piano casually, as a violinist, looking mostly at the polished carlines of the deck above.

It was altogether a most unconventional operation, and I judged from side glances at Mrs. and Miss Sneed's painful expression that they were certain it was not the proper thing. But they bore in silence and telegraphed heated questions at me that concerned themselves with Mr. Kimborough's sanity, or whether he might be a Maritime Province piano-tuner. I failed to see, and I imagine they settled on the latter. And in the silence the pianist put back the cover and the front. He left out the lower panel, that the tone might be fully unmuffled, he discarded the stool, he selected a powerful chair, and he sat on it before the impassive keyboard. And throughout these operations he seemed quite unaware of

himself or of us, which requires large individuality and detachment.

Then, preludes being in fashion, he began. Sitting solemnly erect, he struck middle C with his right thumb, paused, and slowly played the scale of C major with one hand, high-fingered, like a child. The blazing audacity of this should have informed the meanest intelligence, but Mrs. and Miss Sneed smiled one more covert and derisive smile, which doubtless prevented their seeing, if they could have seen, that in measured time and weight those notes might have been struck by a regulated machine, but by no man they had ever known. He went up again on C major as slowly, but with both hands, and each pair of notes sounded as one bell. It was his rebuke to Mr. Spiers, and I think Mr. Spiers took it. He was looking at the carpet. Then the pianist's right hand started at middle C again and went up on the chromatic scale slowly, but increasing speed, always increasing speed. (The smiles were fading.) He came down in a wind-swept cascade,— German fingering,— but you heard each note like a falling pearl. (The smiles were dead.) He went up again,— French fingering: the shadow of his hand had another shape,— and the driven keys rose up behind in a following wave as even as in the wake of a ship. Then, as his arm swung across the keyboard once more — English fingering this time — and back in any fingering that seemed to him desirable, with the speed of a falling star, his left hand rose and joined in that single scale, and the two rode down in glittering alternation: but to the listen-

ing ear it was always the same, soft, and as even as rain falling in a calm. Then came chromatics that swung apart, chromatics at outrageous harmonic intervals, and finally a storm of chromatic octaves that blended into cannonading, and drifting thunder. Always erect, effortless, his body hardly moving, it was rather like the work of some extraordinary machine built to express human emotion without the use of human words — and he stopped.

The sound of dripping on the deck came back, and the whole Sneed family drew breath as if to marvel, but they were late. He had begun again on arpeggios and involved runs, interwoven, and in the midst fell thundering chords that miraculously fitted in and made a sort of stately melody of their own, through many modulations, till the whole was permitted to die down, and the runs thinned to one trill that lived for a little in the treble and ended with a pop on a note an octave higher, as though it had been a bubble and had burst.

So far this had been nothing but refined mechanics, and his foot had never touched a pedal, but the girl looked at me with amazed eyes.

"It 's the most wonderful thing I ever heard in my life," she said. She barely breathed the words, but he waited, with his hand above the keyboard. Again the Sneeds seemed about to speak; but there was something in the air, and they forbore. Appearing to consider, he let the pause endure till the dripping on the deck-planks became painful, and he reduced the imperial females of the Sneed family to extreme misery, so that they shifted

noiselessly and uncomfortably in their seats. I presume nothing like this had ever happened to them in their lives.

When he began, everybody seemed greatly relieved. Why he should have chosen Beethoven's Sonata in C minor — what is ordinarily called the "Pathetic Sonata"— I failed to divine.

He opened it with restrained magnificence, and the first ponderous bars breathed mystery and momentous things to come. He overlaid it with such clean repose that the thundering first chords left no impression of noise. They drew instead the picture of a most awful calm, and it seemed as if a vast, overshadowing curtain were being parted and rolled back. I suddenly remembered the outer silence, and a light began to break, so I followed in spirit. In the middle of the first movement it pleased him to become facetious, and, without moving a muscle in his face, I truly believe that on the outer point of the sand island he dug up that jetsam flat and those sea-boots for them once more, with astonishing detail. I do not for a second think that he made all this clear to the Sneed family, for people of their religion are difficult to convince, but they developed expressions that seemed to indicate grave doubt.

Then he broke into the measured words of the *adagio,* and at once it was clear why he had chosen the sonata. He was using it as a most lofty sermon. There is a pleasing irresponsibility about music that enables you to deliver many admirable maxims without seeming un-

necessarily disagreeable. And this is by no means imagination.

What it may have intended to say to the Sneeds and Mr. Spiers I have, of course, no method of knowing; but I think it was something like this, though this has all the rhythm and poetry left out:

Do not have too great a dignity, most especially if you have never done anything to attain it: it will assuredly end in extreme abasement. Great possessions alone are the least of little things, for this world forgets even the names of its palaces unless there lives a just man or a good woman within. It is utter unwisdom to set up false standards and forget the true light. The unnecessary complication of beliefs is a fearful thing and will multiply your troubles as the sands of the sea, and your imaginings and your heartburnings will pass as of no value. Never forget that the true universe lies wholly outside these things. (Here, that everything might be seen strictly in its proper proportion, he brought through it all the sound of deep and far-away breakers and the rustle of sun-warmed leaves, and it seemed as if, nearer at hand, pure-minded men were building a city, intent on some great end. Then the words continued.) All the old and sweet simplicities are as they were and always will be, and the established laws are as inexorable as when they were devised for the preservation of all good. (For fear this might not be clearly understood, the music said it all over again an octave higher, so that everybody suddenly looked at everybody else, and as

suddenly away.) Insincerity, sang the notes, is a terrible thing, because it makes you most truly unhappy, and for so long that your picture of what happiness may be is utterly dimmed, and the one little satisfaction you have left in the world is in thinking that nobody else is happier than you, which is very pathetic and would make it a very miserable world indeed. ("Miserable world indeed" breathed itself over again, lower down, very softly, twice. Then everything began and repeated itself with great slowness, but with great sureness from the first, so there could be no mistaking its import, after which it proceeded toward the end of that part.) But, though you may not believe it, people do not truly go yachting for the sake of San Domingo mahogany and lockers with leaded-glass fronts. There is another reason altogether, which does not involve any one admiring you, or even seeing you, or the altering of the course of a single penny of money. No one can hear these things and doubt their sincerity, so perhaps it might be better if you believed them all. He stopped again, with that audience held in a spell, only long enough for the sound entirely to die out of the strings before he began the last movement.

And this he made into the very direct story of the oncoming of a storm and of its fury and its passing, and with it there seemed to come great discontent, and some fear, with the falling of certain obscure things that had stood before; but in the diminishing end it seemed better, after all, that they had fallen, and the spirit was joy rather than sadness. He made it altogether very

significant, which is more than I had ever succeeded in thinking of the last movement of the C minor before.

From that second until he finished we seldom moved.

First, patiently, he considered the afflicted atmosphere: artificial with the breath of New World snobs, overladen with half-broken faith in things that were largely unworthy, smoking with great jealousy, and strained with little and eternal suspicion. He smiled the least shadow of a smile and undertook to change it. Think of carrying fairies into Craig Street for Mr. Sneed to see! Yet, with Schumann's help, he did, and Mr. Sneed saw and, I think, was astounded. And the sound of little footfalls among new leaves had not quite gone before he brought children, in the flesh, velvet-skinned and shy, with their troubles and all their ambitions — Erster Verlust, Traümerei, and some others — until you dropped away from your matter-of-factness, softly backward into the era of dreams that were pure gold and questioned very seriously how nearly proper the gilded monuments you called your present-day standards might be. Here, fearless of his hold over the Sneed family and Mr. Geoffrey Spiers, he lowered the atmosphere, thinned the heat, laid bare the naked trouble, till every questioning note came out, and his enthroned detachment and tempered restraint carried him through and held each waiting ear on the fall of the next key, till the allaying harmonies let down the tension at last and he had things fully his own way. It was wholly superb. In this mood he played one thing more, the trio from Schubert's Second Scherzo, in D♭.

Then temperately he began to build up. He did it with the old standards and led his listeners through wonder and amazement, through the recollection of their lost loves and the best that was in them, till he thralled them in transcendent grandeur at the finish. When he evenly laid out the heaven-inspired harmonies that open the Pilgrim's Chorus — he was using the Liszt transcription — I saw Mr. Spiers start. It had reached home somewhere; and when the pianist, sitting rigid as bronze, came back to the theme for the last time, with the great rhythm booming steady and enormous and slow as the swells from deep water on the outer beaches, and the violins whimpering behind, Mr. Spiers's hand moved over his eyes, as though to shade them from the light — and I think he forgot us — and Mr. Sneed sank low down in his chair and scowled at nothing, straight ahead. Of Miss Sneed it is but fair to say that she sat like a glazed doll, though her mother's face had lost half its hardness and all its cunning. As for the girl on the transom by me, except that I could see her breathing quickly, she was not moving so much as by a hair's-breadth, and her fascinated gaze lay on the rippling keys.

Here, that our feelings might be relieved, he drifted through two Chopin studies, the F minor, as though you passed where the wind moved among poplar-trees over an unseen brook, and the G♭ Major (octave), where somebody's heart danced with almost too much joy, and then the curious little pathetic repeat at the end, so that it seemed there must always be something pathetic at the end of everything. Then three Chopin waltzes, light

as blown foam, with the notes whirring under his balanced hands until it was evident that if they went a little faster your exhilarated brain would fail to follow at all; and then the Fantaisie Impromptu, but not as it is played at graduating recitals. A rush of soft-voiced notes that mounted and fell, grew, always hurrying, as though in preparation for something of overshadowing importance, rose till they sang and ran above many blaring chords that slowed into two portentous, breathless, *largo* bars, so that your heart might be fully prepared for that abused melody, and then the Fantaisie Impromptu of the salons. It was slow and full of reminiscent deviltry and it showed us the surface armor of every serious thought he ever had. It was polished, as restrained as everything else — I suspected when the restraint would depart — and suggestive of anything you might want suggested. In the middle of it he laughed himself,— Miss Roche's cheeks were blazing,— and I was sensible of an overwhelming desire for the dawn dimming the London lights somewhere east of the Park.

The next failed to help matters much in this direction. It was the A♭ Major Ballade, but it was long past having any reference to Mr. Spiers. However, throughout its length he never lifted his eyes from the carpet. Here came out the pianist's command of many voices. They were distinct, and as unassuming as the voices of children, and they said things with shocking directness. I don't know what the others felt, but through the scent of certain broken and fading violets I felt pure silk that clad the warmth of mature youth, and heard and saw

startling voices and eyes that came from far behind the veil, until I was called away from this to see Mrs. Sneed staring and holding to her chair as the theme expanded, till it suddenly dropped away and left her in the midst of very soft music, a self-conscious, fat lady looking about her to see who might have seen. But toward the end she forgot again, her mouth drooped, and she gave herself over to wonder at least and I imagine to whatever else she might be capable of feeling.

At the end of this followed a fifteen-second silence in which the pianist stared into some country that lay beyond the keyboard, and then this amazing series, unbroken:

Rubinstein: Kammenoi Ostrow.

Rubinstein: Grande Staccato Étude de Concert.

Schubert-Liszt: Erlking.

Chopin: Sonata in B♭ minor.

In the first movement of the Kammenoi Ostrow his right hand might have been some incredible machine, and in the second the girl beside me watched the high C♯ that struck with electric promptness and could no more conceivably be missed than a planet could swerve from its appointed way. In the Staccato Étude and the Erlking it went beyond all machinery and could only be the human hand, trained through many undoubting years by a man's full will and controlled by the slow-earned breadth of the human mind — the wonder of the world. I, being a man, remember struggling to conceive, even then, what it might be that held me altogether enwrapped, and remember judging that more than half

I heard and saw startling voices and eyes that came from far behind the veil

of it must be the overshadowing repose that considered all things aside as, effortless, it led on the notes, to call out every burning association, to rake up every half-forgotten sympathy that is woven into the golden tissue of the sacred days gone past. The same sound of moonlit seas; the smoke of spring fires; the whoop of wind overhead; the sustained sigh of pine forests, long unseen; the dry rustling of ripe wheat in another country; the piled-up clouds of heartbreaking summers; the crescendo clicking of an oncoming cab-horse's hoofs in silent London streets — all as clear-cut as this; warm and sincere lips across immeasurable gulfs that it is better not even to think about, and the death of some one among the others, your own flesh and blood, and so the passing of great hopes. But with the wind-swept closing of the Erlking the depth was not yet reached. With the least pause he opened Chopin's great sonata, and when he attained to the Funeral March the whole world lay under the shadow of a sorrow that no one strove to mend till that beautiful voice took up the hymn of the assurance of joy, and all things to come, and your blinded, steadfast faith came back, through tears.

My silly tears were real, better to admit, though no one saw, and in front of me the girl's shoulder was shaking and the dark blue eyes were filled. What the others might have been doing I do not know, for I did not see them.

The pianist sat very formally erect, with tight lips, and moved his chair a fraction of an inch. Up to this moment it had all been the fullness of remembered days

without one word of great ambition and the hope of the days ahead. Now it was coming.

He smote the middle C♯ with his closed fist and the following chord with the full weight of his hands. Everybody started at the crash, and, without looking, I saw Mrs. and Miss Sneed's released eyes stare at me, wondering if this might be another little joke. But it was no joke. Instead it was the Second Rhapsody; that each great pianist had played; that many great musicians had laughed at — because they could n't play it to save their scholastic souls; that Anton Rubinstein used to use to lift up his rocking audiences out of their seats and on their feet and break them into cheering as he finished. Even in the stately metronome-beat of the Lassan, Mr. Montgomery Sneed began to shift on his chair, and later, with the restrained tempo ever coming on and the new voices shouting in the chorus, I watched the color mantling up in the neck of that graven image, his daughter. Also a change came over the pianist. The rigidity let down a little, and the restraint that had cloaked him for an hour fell away only enough to leave you not quite sure that it had. But the moral effect, like the moral effect of any little departure from all fully consistent things, was enormous.

No man may describe the Second Rhapsody, or the stars in heaven, or the eyes of the girl he loves. Of the pianist it is sufficient to say that his tempered fingers fled down the glittering pathway with the brazen assurance of a pianola and the golden irresponsibility of a boy; and when, after the wavering octaves ran apart and massed

into the final growing peal of preparatory thunder, and he romped into the theme once more and through other miraculous octaves that whirled like driven snow and blended into the succeeding crashes at the end, Mrs. Sneed, tottering with excitement, stood up and started to come forward, and Mr. Sneed, chewing a cold cigar, followed behind, with Miss Sneed in the rear. The pianist, half turning, said, "Sit down, please!" and the Sneed family lowered itself, abashed, in a row on the nearest seat, while he wheeled back and cleaned the pathway for the A♭ Major Polonaise.

It was a wholly fitting climax: the portentous introduction; the towering majesty of the main theme; all the blood of youth in the vast, insistent phrases blaring out from the strained vitals of that piano; the disposed breathing spaces; the magnificent preparation, and the sonorous oncoming of the main theme again; the great four-sharp melody clanging above the growing roar of the bass whipped by his amazing left hand, while I shivered, unashamed, and the girl beside me trembled on her seat. And when the theme came back for the last time, that screwed-down piano rocked in its place and the wine-glasses chattered in their racks over my head.

So he finished, and as he rose, everybody rose with him. The Sneeds and Mr. Spiers, stuttering, were coming on, but the girl beside me, whose eyes glistened, spoke first.

"I did n't know there was such a thing as music in the world," she said, "and I don't believe any one else in the world can play like that! Won't you shake hands?

There are some things I think I can do better than any one, too." The pianist looked at her curiously, and gravely stretched out a hand.

"Yes," he said; "that is right. We can all do something better than any one else. One of the things you can do is say what you mean — and we can't all do that."

He bowed the stiff bow, and Mrs. Sneed, incapacitated, came on again, trying to cram words into a fitting phrase. The pianist's hand went up as the hand of an archbishop.

"Listen!" he said. Mrs. Sneed checked.

Rain, as it fell in the beginning of the deluge, lashed unevenly on the deck above, and borne down through the sounding mainmast by my head came the measured slat of a throat-halyard that no zephyr would move. Then rubber boots scuffed heavily across the deck, and an indistinct voice overhead said: "I think the white pinkie's gone, sir. I don't know, sir, but I think so, sir."

"Gone! Of course she's gone!" whooped the voice addressed, as from the sky or the main-rigging.

"Gone where?" inquired Mr. Sneed in the pause. I caught up my cap from a transom, and fled up the companion-stairs on the pianist's heels. The hatch was being slid open from the outside, and, as we thrust out our heads, fumbling with the door-handle, the cap went also to join the white pinkie. And perhaps it did, for when we reached the deck of the cockpit that little ship, carrying a jumbo that might have been a lady's lace handkerchief in the rain, and a treble-reefed mainsail, slid past like a phantom close under the *Gloria's* stern, slashing the

seas and sailing almost into the teeth of the wind. Her cockpit, lighted dimly by an unseen cuddy lantern, lurched within ten feet of my eyes. One shadowy figure lay stretched to windward, straining on a jib-sheet, and another crouched under the lee coaming with a hand on the jumping tiller. In one moment, in the direct light of the lantern, I saw an untroubled French face, bearded and rain-beaten, and in the next it was gone, and I was left wondering why he chose to blind himself with the light. But the explanation was at hand, for in a dozen seconds light and pinkie had vanished, and I turned to see that even the *Rorqual's* tungstens were almost smothered in the gloom. So, as he could see nothing, he had given up trying, and was bound up to windward, steering by the rain in his eyes, under the mercy of Heaven. Some one dropped on deck from somewhere, and I heard the rub of oilskins as he came aft.

"God help 'em!" he said. "I wonder where they're going." This was the captain. A voice proceeded from under the shadow of a tied-down Cape Ann hat close by my right shoulder, and, by elimination, I judged this to be the cook.

"I think they're goin' up under the lee of those islands, sir. I don't know, but I think so, sir."

"It's a sort of crime," grunted the captain to me, "to let those fellows come out with the ground-tackle they have — one little home-made grapnel that 'll only hold on rock bottom, a couple of thirty-pound fishing-anchors, and thirty fathoms of line too small and mostly too old. The Lord looks after 'em, but the government ought to

help. However, for our size we 're not much better — maybe worse. There 's another of 'em preparin' to leave us. She has n't dragged yet, but she 's taken warning by the white fellow. Watch 'em get away: it 's very pretty an' quiet, like a man-o'-war comin' to anchor; but she 's got three aboard. They think it 's too far to le'ward to be healthy; an' they 're like the big black gulls — they know."

The light of a barn lantern with a corrugated tin reflector flared suddenly almost within hand-reach and introduced two figures that labored on a dancing, rain-swept bow. The light fanned down to a blue spark, then blazed and threw their dilated shadows across a reefed and slatting mainsail beneath which one man stood at attention. In a dozen seconds the workers ceased, a little jib slid up by magic, filled with a jerk, and that pinkie also paid off and plunged up the wind. As she drove past, a lighted hand held the lantern overside, and a boy, white-faced and spray-mantled, lay outboard over the windward bow and threw armful after armful of eel-grass to leeward like forked hay.

"Blast that stuff!" said the captain.

"Garden o' the Gulf," commented the cook, pretending not to look into the Northeast. The captain stared at the void where the pinkie had vanished.

"She had half a ton of it on her anchor, did y' see?" he said. "I s'pose our mudhook had gone to by-by in a sea-cow's private hay-field an' is liable to wake up mostly any time. Then we 're due to leave immediately. How far is it to the rocks — a quarter of a mile? With this

little draft of air, that should take nearly three minutes. Won't those Oregon pine sticks look nice in the gray dawn lyin' up against the scrub spruces on the bank, an' the little green crabs crawlin' over the cushions, an' the sculpins livin' inside the piano? *But* we 'll have the lettuce an' the ice. F'r the Lord's sake, don't forget that!" and he spat widely down the wind and looked into the zenith, where the *Gloria's* spars towered a hundred feet in the dark. "Peter," he said, "you an' I better get the sail on her an' follow the pinks up to windward. Run and put the mainsail on, will y'!" This enormous sarcasm passed unheeded except that by the little glare from the riding-light we could see the cook's wet smile as he patted the fifty-eight-foot main-boom.

"But what are you going to do?" I inquired.

"God knows," he said, "unless you can lend us some men — an' then have n't y' got a platinotype of this acetylene-lighted palace, drawin' nine feet of water, beatin' round this hole in the dark in a gale of wind? No, Mister, we stay here — until we leave; an' then, as I said, God knows. Oh,"— his voice lowered,—"*now* we 're saved!" Mr. Sneed and Mr. Spiers barged out of the companion-hatch done up in expensive yachting oilskins.

"Blowing fresh!" said Mr. Spiers to the captain. The cook addressed the pianist and me aside.

"He learned that from me," he said proudly, "or I think he did, sir. I 'm always sayin' it. He don't know the difference between a fresh breeze an' a typhoon. So long as the deck 's kept level and his hair stayed on,

he'd say it like that —'Blowin' fresh'— like that. He's awful nautical." The owner and this guest did not seem to have inspired proper respect in the crew.

At this instant the third pinkie fled past us to windward, a little, troubled shadow over a rocking wake, except when she cut for a second through the white, outflung light from one of our ports. The last we saw of her was when her gaff swooped under our jib-boom and a cloud of softwood sparks from her cuddy stove rose over our bows like spray and drifted aft, fighting it out with the rain.

"It's gettin' lonely, sir," said the cook. The captain stared after the sparks.

"That was the *Sea Serpent,* from Souris," he informed us. He had been born in these parts. "But she don't look very fierce to-night. The other black one is from Georgetown,— she's got no name,— and the little white fellow is a Frenchman from Petit de Gras."

"It's giving them fits, isn't it?" said Mr. Spiers, joyfully, leaning against the rain. "I wish another would come along for the sake of a little excitement." The captain viewed him with an explicit eye.

"You'll get excitement enough before daylight," he said, and he unfolded to Mr. Sneed and Mr. Spiers the precise manner and quantity of excitement he looked forward to; and, as his feelings were overloaded, he explained fully, once more, how he thought they might have got along without the lettuce and the ice, and was altogether so eloquent and convincing that when he finished, Mr. Sneed was running about in the cockpit ask-

ing what could be done and Mr. Spiers had fallen back into silence. And the beginning of that great Northeaster played in the *Gloria's* rigging as an evening breeze plays in the awakened strings of an Æolian harp, and outboard the *Rorqual's* faint lights marched solemnly about over the unseen deep, the only visible thing in that overwhelming darkness. As for the deluge, it drifted across the *Gloria's* deck, first to starboard and then to port; for that ship, conformably with announcement, had begun to range around her suffering anchor. The captain looked at me.

"You remember what I told you about the bull-calf an' the picket," he said. "Now we start." And we started. The first result followed close. Together we had been watching the even swing and return of the *Rorqual's* lights, because there was nothing else to watch, when suddenly they paused, held steady, and moved slowly up the wind. I saw Mr. Sneed's bewildered eyes when he said, "Is your boat going, too?"

Now, excepting only the *Flying Dutchman,* I had never heard of anything afloat that moved up the wind without some urgent reason, especially when at anchor. If this phenomenon appears to take place in another ship it is largely probable that your own ship is going down the wind instead. I was on the verge of submitting this theory when I was struck on the chest by the captain, going forward.

"Come on," he roared, "we 're off!" and disappeared over the crown of the trunk-deck. The cook and I, following the sound of rubber boots, arrived in time to hear

a mighty splash under the starboard bow and a brief run of chain through the hawse-pipe. I faced an extra sheet of water that tasted salt and fell over some one fitting brakes to the windlass.

"Here, tally on!" he said, "and we 'll get that anchor up and clean the grass off it. I knew we 'd start, so I had this one ready to let go, but I did n't know we 'd start so quick." On one side the captain and I, and on the other the cook and Mr. Kimborough pumped frantically in the dark, while the *Gloria's* bow dipped in the rising sea, and the steel forestay overhead boomed under the stroke of each following gust that came in, a little heavier, from the open gulf. The captain grunted across the windlass-brake:

"This is going to be a snoozer, summer or no summer."

"Started in just like the August gale, sir," chimed the cook from the other side.

"You shut up and go down and get a lantern." As the cook went, Mr. Spiers was ordered in to sweat in his place. No two-hundred-pound anchor of my acquaintance ever came like that, and I said so; but whatever it was, it brought up hard at last, and the captain hung outboard with the lantern.

"Look, will y'!" he gasped. "God's wonder it came at all. We got the whole Ramp's Channel middle-ground." On the ultra-violet trail of a curse that was designed to embrace the whole eel-grass family he cast himself over the bow on to the bobstay, where the tops of the seas washed his legs to the hip, and tore at the cart-

load of that sleek seaweed that swung from the hawse-pipe to the water. We ripped at it from above with a pike-pole and two boat-hooks, and it hissed in the wind like many serpents and drifted astern, until in the woven center we found the anchor, fouled on the stock beside. The captain cleared it with one deft twist of his arm, and as he rose over the rail we let it go once more. Then for half a minute we waited; then breathed more freely. The *Gloria* was holding. But the captain spoke as a man without faith.

Aft, in the shelter and glare of the companionway, we found Mrs. Sneed and the two young ladies listening to the whole mighty performance aloft, the shouting of the wind in the stays, the steady pound of the main throat-halyard, and the clank of a threshing burton block against the shrouds, all coming down through the uneven roar of the rain. Mr. Sneed was moving distressfully about in the cockpit, Miss Sneed looked scared and white and Mrs. Sneed's voice shook.

"Is there any danger?" she inquired thickly.

"No, Madam," said the pianist. Miss Hilda Roche had put on a sou'wester and a full-length oilskin coat, new and glaring yellow. Here was the final touch. I watched the wet, brown hands, fascinated, while they buttoned the last buttons; then she came out.

"You poor things," she said in her big voice to the pianist and me, "you 're awfully wet," and she felt our shoulders; "but I 'm a fool — you 're soaked through a dozen times. Why did n't they give you oilskins?" I am certain that up to that moment neither the pianist

nor I knew whether we had on oilskins or not. "I 'll go and get them for you now," she said, "they 'll keep you warm, even if it 's too late to keep you dry." And she would have, but at that moment a slow voice out of the darkness remarked: "I think we 're goin' again, sir. I don't know, sir, but I think so, sir." The captain leaped and swung the lantern over the stern. Eel-grass once more, but this time standing eel-grass, waved in the troughs of the seas. The full curse had come upon us: the *Gloria* was over the edge of the flats. He looked aloft in the dark as though expecting heaven to open and show him a way out.

"Maybe they 'll catch on the bank of the channel," I said, to be encouraging.

"They would n't catch on the brass rim o' hell with that stuff under them," he whooped. Mr. Kimborough prodded me in the ribs and whispered hoarsely:

"The fight is now on. The Lord has seen fit to take up my sermon where I left it off." Then the captain seized me by both shoulders.

"I don't know what y'r big gasoleners are worth on a pull," he said. "D' y' think you could tow us against this?" I said I was sure of it. The little two tons of metal in each engine contains a concentrated fury of which the steam-bred man is studiously unaware, and I had faith in the *Rorqual*. Her great anchors were handled by electric windlasses and she was as nearly a two-man boat as any ninety-footer could be. This I told in a forty-second council of war, while we hung to the boom-shears. They would need Mr. Simpson and Mr.

Anderson and the *Rorqual's* cook, all of them, to help deal with the *Gloria's* anchors and the lines, and then their hands would be overfull. Could Mr. Kimborough and I handle the *Rorqual* alone?

"Not and handle the line," I said. "We 'll need some one to steer." The girl had been listening with bowed head.

"I could steer, could n't I?" she said.

Why not? The captain shouted at me:

"She brought us from Cape Chatte to Fame Point like a quartermaster." Then turned the shout in her direction: "Good stuff! Of course you can steer, if you can ever get there. Now jump!" (I do not think this is the way captains of yachts usually talk to the owner's guests, but the spirit of the Lord was breathing in the *Gloria's* rigging, and certain apparent distinctions seemed less apparent.)

While the pianist was leading the *Rorqual's* gig in from the boat-boom, the girl dived into the saloon, and I saw her worming into a scarlet sweater, and as she came back, buttoning up again and graphically explaining to Mrs. Sneed in the companionway, I heard that scared and outraged woman say something about "chaperon," and the girl waved a hand at the roaring sky, and laughed, and came on, running.

"I 'm ready," she said to me. We should need three pairs of oars, and Mr. Spiers, being the least useful thing in sight, was to come also.

"Get in," she commanded, "and help me down." Her voice was as level as an organ tone. The cook

jabbed into the dark with a boat-hook, fighting off the shadow of the curveting gig, and from the invisibility to windward came the suggestive hiss of an extra large sea. Mr. Spiers paused, and the pianist sprawled in among the thwarts. The captain showed symptoms of great strain.

"For God's sake, hurry up!" he said, staring astern; and at the word Miss Roche slid blindly over the rail, and the gig and the pianist caught her miraculously in mid-air.

"Lend him a hand!" roared Mr. Kimborough, referring to Mr. Spiers. The captain lent him a hand, two hands, under his arms, and dropped him in what seemed to be the right direction. He gasped like a frightened child as he disappeared, and we heard the clatter of upflung oars in the boat and knew that the aim had been true. I watched my chance and tumbled in on the forward thwart, the painter, wind-borne, snapped aft over my shoulder, and we were swept astern. For ten furious minutes, lashed by water, blended salt and fresh, we fought to windward toward the place where the *Rorqual* should be, found her uncertain lights at last, and gained on them a foot at a time, while the girl bailed, till we were under the polished, rolling white sides and a line fell across my arms. I knotted it into the painter and let go, and was aware that some one was hoisting the accommodation-ladder out of the way and had thrown a pilot-ladder over the side in its stead — which was great wisdom. Up this, while the gig reared, the girl went like a sailor.

"That 's the dandiest row I ever had in my life," she said to me as soon as I reached the deck. Then I fell into Mr. Simpson's arms.

"Welcome home, Pop!" he bellowed in my ear. "Now y' know what a sock feels like in a washin'-machine. What y' got, a shipwrecked crew?"

"No," I said, "but they 're going to be unless we can stop it," and while Mr. Anderson and the pianist fled toward the windlass I unfolded the plan. He followed down into the engine-room, where he recited in a loud voice:

"Society item: Foremouth Witness. 'Durin' the recent typhoon our genial fellow-townsman, H. Simpson, Esq., was the means of savin' from destruction in North Harbour the palatial yacht *Gloria, of* Montreal, *as* well as the life of her owner, Mr. Montomery Sneed, *and* his family. We understand Mr. Simpson is to be knighted. Welcome back, Sir Henry.' I could n't be wetter if I was drowned. Produce y'r orders."

A minute later, in mighty anticipation, the *Rorqual's* main engines were running free on the governors, her little electric-light plant was whirring a song of its own in the uproar, two blurred and blinded figures kneeled in the drifting water over a lantern in the extreme eyes of her, trying to watch the chain come in, and on the bridge I wrestled, as Jacob with the angel, with a merciless and thundering weather-cloth, endeavoring to trice it up, and, between jerks, to tell Miss Roche what to do, and how to run the engine-room telegraph and the search-light, when the latter machine might be neces-

sary. But she was free from all fear and I left her, with the light of battle in her eyes, facing ahead in that blessed eddy where the weather-cloth turns the wind and the rain upward and saves the officer of the watch.

I had forgotten Mr. Spiers, but on the way down I passed him as a distressed and inaudible shadow being driven round and round — with the sun, for luck — by the pianist, who was now coiling down a new five-inch line.

So everything was prepared for that struggle and I dropped into the engine-room and waited.

The following three minutes were the worst I had to suffer in that eventful night. The lights were out, so that whatever there was to see outside might be seen, but in all the troubled universe I could make out nothing but the wavering line of sparks that played on the brushes of the dynamo. Overhead, sea and sky locked in one unbroken roar, and below I was flanked by the clang of the unseen engines, and the little bronze reverse levers trembled under my hands. But all things have an end, and at the end of what might have been a day and a night there came the uneasy swerve of the *Rorqual's* head falling off, the engine-room floor rose up and lurched under my feet, and I barely caught the grind of the telegraph-bell in the uproar and threw in the levers. In the same instant a chance waterspout whirled in through the open hatch, and above the confused roar of water in my ears I heard the engines steady to work, and climbed the ladder in time to meet two figures that fled aft to the taffrail, where they hu-

mored the gig like a panicky colt. The pianist still labored patiently and seemed to be weaving a net around himself and Mr. Spiers with two heaving-lines, and the *Rorqual,* rolling most shamefully, swung into the trough of the sea and nosed her precarious way through the water-swept gloom. Cool as a fountain-bathed statue and strictly according to instructions, the girl led her just so far southeast and then headed her up into the wind, and not one flicker could we see. The northeaster had swallowed the *Gloria's* lights as a snow-cloud swallows the Pleiades. As I reached the taffrail, Mr. Anderson spread his arms wide apart to show the utterness of her disappearance.

"Here! She was here!" he said, and pointed downward, and as Mr. Anderson had been born with the sense of absolute position in unorganized space I was sure she had been.

"Yes," I inquired, "but where is she now?" He shook his head and swung his hand toward heaven at a venture. We stopped the screws and we sidled to leeward, mantled in such rain as I had never seen. It drifted along the deck, shoulder-high, in all respects like the out-flung steam from the blow-off valves of a liner's boilers, and overside we could hear the hiss of each comber and never once see the flash of its crest. Oilskins served only to hold more water, but even here the unabashed Mr. Simpson spoke.

"In a long and varied life," he said, "this is the most moisture I ever seen. It 'u'd make a tropical thunderstorm feel like a prohibition town in the Arabian Des-

ert, would n' it? I 'm what y' call a cold compress renewed every thirty seconds an' it 'll take me two riotous weeks to get deehydrated again — jumping Jerusalem, we 're aground!"

Something jarred heavily under our feet and in the same instant, athwart the sky, appeared a longish object, pointed, faintly lighted, and white-tipped, that might have been the sword of an archangel. This descended and plucked at an awning stanchion and, as we cowered, went aloft again, leisurely, taking the stanchion with it, while the frame, inch iron pipe, stood up in an ornate loop as though it might have been rabbit wire, and twanged like a harpstring. Within that second an uneasy light flashed in our eyes and we drifted past, speechless, within twenty feet of the *Gloria's* rail. The archangel's sword had been her jib-boom at the extreme end of its range. Beneath the light we saw Mr. Sneed's awe-struck countenance for the last time that evening. Mr. Simpson recovered poise first and, hanging out over the taffrail, addressed himself to Mr. Sneed across the gulf.

"Peek-a-boo!" he whooped. There was no reply.

"Tag!" he roared. "*Your* turn to find *us* now!" I remember the amazed face that was swept into the obscurity. To this day I fail to see how we missed fouling that propeller in the *Gloria's* cables, or why we missed seeing her riding-light. For the next three minutes I revolved at high speed between the engine-room and the bridge, where Miss Hilda Roche presided as unshaken as an old sea-captain, and the *Rorqual* moved

up to windward again, where it became my happy task to balance her like a soaring gull, within sight of the lights. It gave me an increased respect for the gull, who operates without reversing clutches.

While we paused, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Anderson, the cook, and the heaving-line went overside, entangled, into the dinghy, while Mr. Spiers balked once more. The pianist's control left him.

"You come on, will y'!" he said, and when I saw Mr. Spiers last he was fighting at an extreme disadvantage because he was being lowered over the rail in one hand, like a dunnage-bag, and in the next moment the gig had borne him away behind the ghost of a breaking sea, and Mr. Kimborough was astern, paying out line into the fathomless dark. I was certain the girl saw this last performance, but when I spoke to her in the next ten-second visit she made no sign.

"How am I doing?" She never turned her eyes from the vanishing lights nor freed a straining hand to brush back the hair stranded across her wet cheeks.

"Could n't be better," I said.

"I 'm so glad. This is the greatest thing I ever did in my life. I feel as if I owned the whole world." A dim lantern astern waved wide and free, and I heard the pianist roar from aft: "We 've got 'em," and I gave the throttles two more notches. It meant as much more of that potent fluid in each second as would fill a lady's thimble. Softly the strain came on and the shadowy hawser rose up and stood out from the chock like an iron bar. "— Or we got something," he

shouted, dancing on the rope like an excited shark-fisherman as I reached the taffrail. We could even see very faint objects that rose and fell rapidly.

A moment later, clinging to the bent awning stanchion, he said in my ear: "Now you stop running round and consider the magnitude of this business. You think whether now, at this minute, you 'd rather be a bow-legged knight with sheet-iron pants babouching round in the dark, wet grass on a dray-horse with a clothespole hunting for somebody to stick it through, an' the green dye out of your nodding plume running in through the slats in your helmet and down your sweating nose. Talk about romance! We 've sent out the villain to labor and be seasick on a treadmill, and here we are, two big boats in God's hurricane, parading up to windward into God knows where in the rain, steered by a girl with the weight of her arms — an' y' stop or y' go ahead with the shift of your finger. Don't y' pity the chaps that were born a few hundred years ago?"

"The lady on the bridge was saying something along the same general lines about a minute ago. Better go up," I suggested, "and give her the benefit of your advice — and try to keep a lookout ahead."

The following scenes dilated in progressive magnificence.

When we might have been half-way across the harbor — the hydrostatic log stated that we were then making five nautical miles per hour — the wind came down in blasts like the muzzle-blast of a big gun, so that the little stays screamed overhead and the deck trembled under

our feet. A spare oar and an unlashed life-buoy got up together and waltzed away through the night without a sound; a disused pilot-ladder went down the deck like a pursued serpent and wound itself in the taffrail, where it stayed, and I went with it as far as the engine-room hatch, where I stopped through excessive friction, because a round wooden fender had deftly seated me on the deck, after which it mounted mysteriously on the after hatch and launched itself into the sea, and that was the end of it. I hauled myself behind the hatch while the *Rorqual* seemed to pause in her tracks — which was doubtless an illusion — so that I lowered myself into the smell of warm oil, groped for the throttles, and threw them wide open. Even then, in that wilderness of thunder I had to put my hands on the falling ignitors to tell that the engines were running.

On the bridge, which I reached on my knees, one end of the girl's weather-cloth had broken away and roared like a free topsail till we lashed it down. The grommets had blown clean out of 16-ounce duck. The rain no man could face bare-eyed, for it was a level-flung deluge and it bit like hail. So we proceeded by faith, and as we made up our distance, the pianist hung over the rail with a lead. Sometimes he got five fathoms and sometimes three, but always a few feet under the *Gloria's* keel.

"Where 's this calm and restful lee you were talking about?" he shouted. It was not apparent.

"The last country we saw was Nova Scotia. Give a guess where we 'll bring up." I was shaking my head

again when he said: "What part of the universe are we in, anyway? See! You 're going to collide with a comet if you don't pay attention," and he pointed. Perhaps thirty, perhaps sixty yards off our starboard bow a thin banner of fire and sparks trailed to leeward. As I jumped to slow the main engines I heard the little dynamo engine alter its voice and climbed on deck again to find one black pinkie centered in the gaze of the search-light. It was an unforgetable sight. She rode to many cables, plunging rail-deep in what might have been drifting snow, for the surface of the sea was torn to spindrift that swept man-high over the unseen harbor, and the water under the *Rorqual's* flanks was a frothing pot. On her deck, beside the flaming stove-pipe and with an arm round her mainmast, a blurred figure waved wildly for us to go to port, and to port we accordingly went. In dumb wonder as to what the new amazement might be, we and our undirected search-light swung, and the amazement became instantly evident, for into the blazing circle over the starboard bow, in the precise, calculated center of what had been our nicely guessed course, came down the little white pinkie from Petit de Gras. We gasped together. She was under bare poles, but the Frenchman with the untroubled face, still untroubled, sat in the cockpit and steered, and she went past at an awe-inspiring speed with the other man kneeling in her bows, fighting, more furiously than we had fought, with the eel-grass on her last anchor. Her serene helmsman spared a hand to wave at us, which we took to mean "Good luck," and

even smiled, and we shifted the light on to the *Gloria* that he might make no mistake. So, once more, the white pinkie vanished into that terrible night. The girl's eyes were wet with more than rain.

"Poor little thing!" she said. "I wonder where she is going now." I judged ashore, unless there might be a miracle, so offered no opinion. Our stare shifted naturally to the *Gloria* and she also was a sight before heaven. Half a phantom in the rain, every least, movable thing aboard that gilded ship was slack and adrift. Aloft her many halyards thrashed to leeward. Below, the flat-coiled end of each line had been combed out by the wind and festooned over the rail. Aft, her helmsman worked the wheel and she lay as steady on the starboard tack as if she were under plain sail. Forward hung an unrecognizable knot of men, prepared to anchor; and from rail to rail, over her deck as over a breakwater, swept the top of every sea that went that way.

"Look at your home!" said the pianist to Miss Roche, and Miss Roche looked in awe-struck fascination. We turned the light ahead, but it broke blind and useless on a magic-lantern circle of the incoming smother; and, so that it might not dazzle the pinkies or us, we switched it off, and, with the dying red of the carbons passed into unblemished chaos. For a full two minutes, or until our abused pupils opened again, we could see not even the *Rorqual,* but proceeded through a rocking and deafened world clinging to wet teak and navigating by the eternal rain and nothing else. In the

midst of this, my delicate business was to find a certain little three-fathom channel, and in the end, in three fathoms, somewhere, the *Gloria* sheered off and anchored, and we, moving out of reach of her utmost range, anchored as well. Mr. Kimborough and I, sweating in the cold, heaved in the five-inch line, and for a quarter of an hour there was peace. Not that the rain or the wind eased for one quarter-second. Instead, underlying all the outrageous noise, there rose up between gusts a new and terrible sound, rather like the bourdons of a cathedral organ — the importunate Gulf of St. Lawrence worrying the beaches as they had not been worried in thirty years. But the *Gloria's* troubled lights held their place and so reassured us that we danced on the bridge grating in our glee, after which the pianist and I went down to put on oilskins over our clinging clothes, because the wind was reaching in to our marrow. I was groping for the second suspender of the overalls when the girl came down the saloon stairs in two leaps.

"Come quick!" she said. "I'm afraid the *Gloria*'s gone again." And the second suspender remained unfound. If the *Gloria's* lights meant the *Gloria,* she was gone most assuredly, for the space where they had been lay as empty as the outer universe. Mr. Kimborough stared.

"Now, wouldn't that whiten your hair!" he said. "What happened to them?"

"Nothing at all," she said; "they just seemed to go

out." It was a powerful description. Mr. Kimborough turned his puzzled eyes on me.

"Well?" he said, and without further discussion advanced on the windlass and drove the motors shamefully. The *Rorqual* paid off and fled down the wind once more. We came up with that harassed white schooner traveling sideways and towing her anchors at a most notable speed, and we raked her with the search-light again to find half her overworked crew locked on the windlass and half trying to tie three reefs in her ponderous mainsail.

In his flight aft to his heaving-lines I heard the pianist say, "Poor, poor Henry!" Then I asked the poised person by the wheel if she thought she could bring us just close enough not to be dangerous. She said she could, certainly, no trouble in the world, and she did (the holy truth) in some miraculous way of her own, and she froze the crews of both boats into instant paralysis, for in one particular swoop we missed the *Gloria* by a scant ten feet. The eldest tow-boat captain would have turned gray with terror. In that sea a touch would have been enough, but in the manner of all women she saw only the essentials, no necessity to touch, and Providence regarded His own. And more, the pianist sent his heaving-line across the gap in the face of the gale, which was another miracle, and we saw Mr. Anderson fling himself on its end before it went overboard again, which was a third. So we prevailed on the *Gloria* once more to come up into the three-

fathom channel, and once more we anchored, side by side.

Hereupon there followed the second strained, heart-breaking idleness of that magnificent night. First, through the time it took me to get into the rest of the oilskin suit it seemed as if the gale might be certainly abating, and, immediately following, the gale undertook to show that it could never abate so long as the straining universe hung together. It came, full-toned as in the beginning, out of the true Northeast, and the whole sea smoked. We three crouched under the spouting weather-cloth, fighting against chance eddies and beaten down into hard-breathing silence by the interminable roar, while the *Rorqual* lifted us aloft, little lonely children, and descended in majesty, pounding as though she were running into a reputable head sea. Once, overcome by the tension of wondering what might be the next probable happening, I took an approved and weather-proof lantern and crawled out on the railed turtle-deck to see how the cable was leading. I passed not over painted canvas, but over and through the same curse, wet eel-grass, fresh harvested from the gulf. It had climbed up the cable and lay banked elbow-deep by some mysterious back-draft between the rails; and while I groveled on my face in this heaving meadow the radiance went out from that lantern because it had filled itself with water, and I breathed water through my nostrils and retired backward with eel-grass wreathed round my neck and in my hair, leaving the cable unseen. Once, for one moment, the rain broke, and straight

ahead, within arm's reach, we made out an imposing, battlemented shadow that was without doubt the smallest wooded island, the lee of which we sought. But there was no lee that night. From its left flank an appalling, wavering, silver-gray wall stretched across the full northern horizon, and, shivering, we interpreted that the Strait of Northumberland was breaking over the high beaches that had stood unbreached for half a century. Then it pleased the Lord that this manifestation should be withdrawn and that the deluge should come again. And as it came, some little thing ahead of it that we could see spouted white foam, flashed in the heart of the gloom, and there was one uncertain rocket-trail of sparks — and the ghost of the white pinkie drove past down the wind even once more. It was wholly uncanny and the girl shuddered as she watched the bare spars lurch and disappear.

"Oh, it's a shame! It's a shame!" she said. "Could n't we do anything for them?"

"They might tie up astern without adding much to our load," I said; "but you never can tell how long we may stay —"

"Or how soon we may go." Mr. Kimborough wheeled me round by the arm. "There she drifts again. Come on!" He dived forward. The *Gloria's* lights were moving away, stately as the lights of an outbound steamer, and for the third time the *Rorqual's* blessed automatic anchor came up and we went in pursuit.

Now this was becoming a most wearing struggle.

The engine-room clock said half-past two, and for four hours and a half, which might have been ten overfull minutes, the girl had fought with the wheel and lightly faced the storm and the responsibility of that nerve-wearing night. Now we were to meet graver trouble.

Perhaps a dozen times under the searchlight Mr. Kimborough tried to send that heaving-line aboard the *Gloria*. On seven distinct hair-raising occasions we swung too close to the schooner for any reasonable safety, while she sidled to leeward like the spirit of a white squall, first perilously close to the middleground, then across Ramp's Channel, a caldron, and finally over the flats and into the eternal grass: but our tired star had set. We could accomplish no such wonderful feats as in the last flight. Once the line rose up and wrapped itself about the tip of her main-boom where her captain followed like a siamang ape in time to see it slip off and flash to leeward, while we held our breath. At all other times it played as free from human control as a flying pennant, for throughout these scenes the wind was such that the coil hissed aloud in your hands and no man might even stand on his feet. In the end the *Gloria's* crew saw that it was useless and we watched them leaning together on her quarter over something below. Then from under her stern appeared the upflung bow of the *Rorqual's* gig bringing Mr. Anderson and two other men who fought as if for their future salvation. But this also was useless, for three crested seas broke over them and bore them away into the *Gloria's* lee, while we watched with straining eyes till

they were fished up. Within the same minute the gig filled to the gunwale, and backboard and oars went to leeward with the other flotsam of that great gale.

The next scene occurred with notable swiftness. The *Rorqual* was dropping back and Mr. Kimborough stood with coiled line for still another heave when, of a sudden, over the *Gloria's* stern, the dissolving sky under the search-light took form, dissolved again, took form again — and remained. At the same time an awful thing went past to starboard, moving slowly up the wind, rather like a submarine running awash. The seas broke on its back in sustained thunder, the water around it was white as snow and the spray drifted in its lee like the smoke of a prairie fire.

"Steady — just as you are!" I shouted at the imperturbable helmsman.

"I 'm doing my best," she snapped. "It 's that high bank and — the — rocks — is n't it?"

I nodded.

Mr. Kimborough saw it, for I saw him stand braced as if all eternity depended on his next heave. The crew of the *Gloria* saw it, for they flung themselves on her gig, a lean-bilged canoe, for one more try, which would have been plain suicide. I was half turned to back into the engine-room hatch when beside me, sheer from under the distressed sky, stepped two strange men on deck — not climbed, but stepped — followed immediately by a third. Then all three lowered themselves over the rail, with the precision of a ballet entrance, bearing a line that, tracing overside in awe-struck wonder, I

saw led to a red dory, new-spurned from under their feet, which rode that maelstrom like a grebe. The leader was clad in a frieze ulster and a white tam-o'-shanter with a fuzzy red ball on top, and he embraced me and spake with a pervasive deliberation.

"We was scared of gettin' too near y'r screws. Fetch the line for'd an' we 'll take it from here." I motioned, and we descended on the pianist, who had been given up to watching the *Gloria* and who gasped. They plucked the coil from his relaxed hand, they threaded it outside the reeling stanchions deftly as a young woman working in floss, one jerked the painter, their carriage called, like the pause of a wind-borne basket, they stepped in, and without further words they rolled away, downward and outward and backward, bearing the line with them. It is a conjuring trick learned on the Grand Banks. Without orders, but because of the urgent necessities of the case, the three pairs of oars rose up together and dropped between the thole-pins: then the entire works vanished behind a seething wall, and that line ran out at high speed into the sea. When we saw them next they were uplifted upon an instant and unstable hill, and one man, standing loosely on his feet, was delivering the line's-end into many hands on the *Gloria's* deck.

"Great God Almighty!" said Mr. Kimborough. But this was not all. Presently they returned, flung like a toy balloon through the drenched light, and stepped on deck again, while the *Rorqual* surged on the five-inch line. The man with the white tam-o'-shanter

smiled and roared: "That was what y' call pretty close, but we got her." We strained over the rail while the *Gloria's* spars swung into line.

"*Where* did you come from, anyway?" inquired the pianist. "They say that a dory with three pairs of oars can go through the mouth of hell, but —"

The white tam broke in:

"That 's the place — we been there an' back several times t'-night, ain't we, Isaac? Our schooner — one of the black ones — we dragged, I don't know where — but I guess it must 'a' been hell if they got a department filled with eel-grass for them that goes down to the sea — an' we sailed back, rather close-hauled, every time. Now she 's holdin'— over there." (He pointed, to be exact.) "How many anchors d' y' think we got out? Only six! A ninety an' a hundred in tandem an' four thirties for luck. We just got nicely fixed when we seen you an' your fireworks come tearin' down tryin' to lassoo the big schooner; so we thought we 'd come over and see what we could do. My God! but it 's an awful night: the worst I ever seen in harbor. Have y' got such a thing as a drink?"

We directed them to a small barrel with brass hoops that waited on the saloon sideboard for emergencies, and they did n't keep it waiting longer than necessary.

When they came out we were laboring past the outer line of rocks, working the search-light for our lives. They were comforted — the barrel was half empty — and they seemed to appreciate the vastness of events for the first time, and lost themselves in wonder greater

than our wonder at their coming. When they were fully convinced that there were three of us, and three only, to work lines and anchors and engines and wheel aboard that plunging craft, the wonder changed to astonishment; and when they learned that one of the three was a young woman, the astonishment turned to respect, and they stared at her from behind the funnel until she motioned us all on the bridge.

"Why is it that the *Gloria* drags and this boat does n't?" she demanded.

"The different sort of anchor, chiefly," I said.

"But you only use one, don't you?" (And all the time she was working the wheel, as the captain of the *Gloria* had said, like a quartermaster.)

I said we did, so far.

"Then why don't you give the other one to the *Gloria?*" Her hair blew in my face as I listened in that bent circle.

"How would we get it there?" Being a man in a gale of wind I spoke as her mental superior. The question seemed to puzzle her for five seconds — not more.

"But could n't you fasten it to the end of the rope you tow with and drop it overboard from here? You 've got help now." (Even at that time this recalled one feverish night before a motor-boat race when we had bent beyond hope one blade of a little two-bladed propeller, and labored vainly to straighten it properly, until a woman suggested that we make a plaster-of-paris cast of the hub and the other blade and work from this. Which we did, and were saved.)

"By God, the lady 's right!" said the man in the tam-o'-shanter. "You got a three-hundred-pound patent anchor and the big schooner would n't shift it in three hundred years. We can bend it on before y' could gut a herrin'," and we drew breath for another fight. The free end of the five-inch line, as stiff as wire, was passed forward.

Now, unless you have lowered a stockless anchor out of its hawse-pipe and fished it on to the rearing bow of a boat, which boat is rhythmically colliding with walls of pure surf, with the wind at seventy miles an hour, accompanied by rain that registered five inches of fall in one night — as we learned later — and unless you have worked entirely on the crown of a turtle-deck, which resembles the extreme edge of a calving glacier, you have no conception of the interests of this process. At certain times we gave up, and clung, all five, to the anchor davit and to one another like swarmed bees, breathing water. Failing all other attacks, one of the strangers became heated, and in the face of high heaven went down over the bow on the tackle and hooked the block into the clevis: and once we stopped and counted to see if we were all there. Mr. Kimborough said afterward that it was the busiest few minutes he had so far spent in this life. But in a little all was accomplished, for these men work swiftly. Otherwise they would be many times dead.

We lashed the anchor to the bitts of the windlass, ready to let go, and, belly flat, we crawled back to the bridge. There I lay against the rail in sheer weari-

ness, unashamed, and I think my eyes closed. But immediately a new and ingenious wonder unfolded itself. The pianist seized my arm and spoke in a loud voice in my ear.

"Does Neptune or Boreas or Æolus, or whoever is running this show keep a bull?"

"Why?" I gasped, but it was an unnecessary question, for dead ahead, in the very eye of the wind, something bellowed ferociously and the bellowing grew louder. The fishermen looked at us as if we might be responsible, then at one another in dumb amazement.

"Sounds like a whistling buoy," said one.

"Then if it is, who are we?" rejoined the man with the white tam. "We'd have to be outside, an' we ain't, thank God!" The discussion was interrupted by a very white light that burst on our straining eyes and was as sharply occulted, only to blaze again in the midst of profound groans.

"Why, it's one of them new thunder-an'-lightnin' buoys," said the first speaker. "Hard a starboard or you'll hit it." He jammed the wheel over under the girl's hands, and we twisted the search-light to bear.

"Injun Rocks buoy, by all that's holy! Adrift an' cruised over here an' into this hole all by its lonesome self. I would as soon have expected to see Grandma! Ain't it chronic to think of it comin' shoutin' across that gulf t'-night!" We scrooped by and hooted on the *Rorqual's* siren to warn the *Gloria,* but she was late. It struck her once on the port quarter and though we were beyond hearing any sound, we saw flying white splinters.

Then the flash dimmed down and disappeared and the bull voice was overlaid by the tireless voice of the storm.

"Now come on with your next miracle!" breathed the pianist, addressing the inspired Northeast. "What did you think of that?" he said to the girl, who actually smiled.

"I 'm long past thinking: it 's much too wonderful. I 'm just taking things as they come — I would n't be surprised at anything. I s'pose I ought to have been scared sometimes, but I was n't, truly. I think that 's the Irish in me. As I told you a while ago, I think this is the best time I ever had in my life."

"Are n't you tired?" I ventured.

"Not a bit!" And she visibly was not. Instead, she was standing up like a statue of Diana. The man with the white tam, speaking aside to me, said he was glad the lady was pleased, and that they would now go and explain to the *Gloria's* people about the anchor; but they would come back: and when I came out of the engine-room the red dory had blown into chaos.

Then, in due course, Mr. Kimborough and I, acknowledging a feeling of great loneliness, toppled the big anchor overboard, duly calculated our distance, and the *Rorqual* duly took up her uneasy station for the third time, as a nurse beside a patient that nears the crisis. And then, as we watched for any little sign of those fearless and casual ferrymen, an entirely new phase of the scene came with as startling swiftness as had any of the others.

The great gale broke, even as the *Rorqual's* anchor

smote the water. Not with tempered lulls and heart-breaking blasts between, through an hour and a half, but at once, through ten little minutes; from half-hurricane to full gale, from half-gale to heavy breeze, from light breeze to a breath of summer air, cold as steel and uncanny as a nightmare. The *Rorqual* steadied and paused with the quick-falling swell of shoal water, and within a dozen minutes lay still, while the rain went also, drifting sullenly to leeward and leaving us to listen to the drip of the surprised deck-house in a silence that was walled about with the dying roar, very far away, and the even thunder of the outer gulf, breaking crazy on every reef and bar and beach within range of our over-awed ears. And that the miracle might be complete, the canopy overhead tore across and opened a lane of clean starlight that rifted and spread into indigo fields in which blazed every constellation that lights the snow of a winter evening. The thinning darkness showed something afloat that might be a pinkie and, a little removed, the ghostly white of the *Gloria's* hull.

Hereupon uprose the sound of oars near at hand and the voice of Mr. Simpson over the stilled waters.

"Now what have y' done?"

"Why? How?" we said.

"You 've got y'r silly feet in the wires an' short-circuited the whole business." But in spite of this pleasantry he shuddered as he came over the rail. He made a precise and silent course for the brass-bound barrel, followed by Mr. Anderson and us.

"This thing don't seem to show the pressure it did,"

he said, holding a trembling cup under the tap till it was filled to its gold-lined edge. "Oh, I see! An' the dory's crew fluttered down the wind with their breaths smellin' like the golden gates ajar. That's what brought me home." He drank it off undiluted, gasped, and sat down with tears on his cheeks. We waited through the time Mr. Anderson took to refill and empty the cup and lower himself with hysterical chuckles on the same transom.

"It's all no use," Mr. Simpson said at last. "I could n't tell you about it: there's no place to begin. As a general compendium, I may say that the yachting cruise to the lakes is finished an' that the patients prefer walkin' home to goin' any other way they can think of. The yacht is for sale or to let, an' the great Gulf of St. Lawrence can go — evaporate, if it wants to."— Here he brightened visibly as if the drink might have reached its destination.—"To further accentuate my point, I may say that any time in the evening y' stuck y'r head down the scuttle it was an oratorio. Such yelps y' never heard. When I wake up at night I 'll hear 'em for years an' years. The last stages of a curlin' match was a deaf-an'-dumb asylum beside it. The old woman wept on every ledge from the parlor mantelpiece to the cellar stairs an' varied it by comin' out on the veranda —"

"She took a special fancy to Henry," said Mr. Anderson in ecstasy, "and used to hug him in the rain and ask him to save her till he got embarrassed — did n't y', Henry? — and a little mad. What did y' tell her?"

"I told her," said Mr. Simpson, "that she'd get intercostal neuralgia an' that if she wanted to be saved she'd better go down an' cook some coffee for the shiverin' crew."

"Then," whooped Mr. Anderson, "she forgot about the storm, and that she was a high-class lady operating an enameled yacht, and the old North-Shore-of-New-Brunswick spirit came out and she said she'd see him damned first. She did!"

"She aspersed my motives," said Mr. Simpson with moist eyes, "but for a minute we stood up man to man, as it were. Then she looked round her with a sort of horror — as if she'd made a new patent world an' it had got broke — and went below cryin'. At the same time the pale piece — *Kee-wah-gush-ta-kum-kang-kang-ge-wuk* — was havin' hysterics around the pantry an' the back stairs."— Here Miss Roche, who had been listening in amazement, choked, and Mr. Simpson continued with a trembling voice.—"The rain had washed the soot all down out of the kitchen range, an' the old man, who was goin' about like one of these whirlin' water-bugs, got lots of it on his face. He reminded me of the time the Conservative Party went to Pictou Island an' the pop-valve broke an' blew all the soot out of the boiler tubes — up to that time nobody knew how quick you could make a political picnic into a minstrel show. But it was really funny. Then on top of it all that pink dromedary"— This was Mr. Spiers, but Miss Roche sat unmoved —"come out wearin' a life-preserver. This irritated the captain so that he threw himself on him

an' tore it off an' heaved it to leeward, an' offered to heave him after it if he 'd promise not to come back. Taken altogether, it was a pretty giddy picnic. Work! I 've heaved an' sweated an' shivered an' swore. I 've lifted till I 've shoved my feet out through my boots "— It was so —" an' they never even offered me a cup of cold water or a piece of gingerbread. Not that I was sufferin' for cold water. The intensest moment was when that intermittent drug-store sign come down from heaven an' carried away the port rail. The whole family was convinced that we 'd hit the Inchcape Rock, an' what with the whoops from the buoy, an' the sea an' the rain an' the spasmodic illumination an' me huggin' the old woman to keep her from jumpin' overboard, it was a ghastly scene. My gracious! but I 'm glad I 'm home!" He half filled and emptied the cup again, raised his tired feet out of an extensive sheet of water on the carpet, rolled over on the velour transom, and in one instant, in the midst of one profound sigh, fell asleep. But Mr. Anderson sat up manfully.

We were called aside by footfalls on the deck and the voice of the man with the white tam.

" See," he said, " have y' got such a thing as some sort of a spare anchor — a kedge or some little thing? It 'd be small for you, but it 'd be big for us. We 're goin' through the eye of the storm, an' when the Nor'-wester strikes us the Lord have mercy on us." He spoke with unabated cheer, but there was strain in his voice. We produced a two-hundred-pound kedge from the lazarette, which they received with a howl and bore

away like a feather, heart-free and joking with Heaven, for they knew they were saved. The red dory vanished again to the sound of singing through the night, and in a short space of time we heard a great splash in the distance. The pianist went in and shook Mr. Simpson by the shoulder.

"Those fellows say that we're in the eye of the storm, and that it's coming in from the nor'west worse than ever. If you want to get back to the schooner, now's your time."

At the same moment I tapped the barometer and it jumped a tenth of an inch. Mr. Simpson regarded Mr. Kimborough's face.

"That'll be all right," he said. "You can tell the schooner that it's rescued as far as H. Simpson is concerned. Call me at nine o'clock," and he rolled over and appeared to slumber again instantly.

The essentials of this story are complete. In entire conformity with the laws of meteorology, and because, if you sit on the North Star and face the North Pole the earth turns round in the opposite direction to the hands of a clock, the great Nor'wester came, and it was greater than the great Nor'easter. (You will find the bald record of this whole particular storm in the meteorological records at Halifax — where it was not very bad — no longer ago than August 1, 1908.) It came with a devastating roar and it was awful. But it was apart from our interests. The *Rorqual* stayed where she was. The *Gloria* stayed where she was. If she had not, I

doubt if we could have helped it. Mr. Simpson stayed where he was. It was very cold and we threw a rug over his steaming personality. Mr. Anderson walked in with an alert eye to say that he was going to see this business through, and that we might as well sit down where it was warm. And in the midst of that hurricane — to our eternal disgrace — we must have fallen asleep, for at ten minutes after six in the morning, with the bars of autumn-white sunlight lying across the saloon, the pianist and I awoke partly under one blanket on the saloon floor. Mr. Simpson snored furiously on one transom and on the other Miss Roche, wound in a Caithness rug, slept in the full stripe of the sun the sleep of weariness and peace. Her hair and the rug and the very cushions under her were soaked with water. But in the times of such events these matters pass as of no import. Her lips were parted, and the sunlight struck full across her face, which was so entirely beautiful that the pianist stared at it for, I suppose, more than a minute.

"I like that girl," he said to me as he got up. Outside, Mr. Anderson still walked the deck. The sky was swept clear and clean of every cloud. The harbor was ocher-red from the outer islands to the mainland shores, and ridged under a Nor'wester that even at that time was half a gale, and from windward we could hear plover piping as though autumn had fallen in the night. One black pinkie lay peacefully ashore, high above the highest high-water-mark since the Great August Gale, and a thin smoke drifted from where her crew crouched round

an unseen fire in the bushes; and the other, our friend of the white tam-o'-shanter, rode unblemished to the *Rorqual's* kedge a third of a mile across the water. In the sparkling light between, side by side and as uninhabited as the planet Mars, sat the *Gloria* of Montreal and the little white pinkie from Petit de Gras. This latter had won her fight, but she swam very low in the water and her dory was gone: which matters bred uneasy thoughts in our minds. Presently the red dory of overnight, pulled by three men, came up the wind to investigate. They found the Frenchman of the untroubled countenance and the other man face downward on the stone ballast, half in the water and half out.

"Not dead!" we said.

"Oh, no," they said, "but very tired. They lost their boat, and then they had to work for their lives. They 'll be all right in a little. My God! but it was an awful night! Have y' anything left in that cask?"

Now the curious thing about this story is that there is really no way of telling the logical end of it. It was merely a case, as advertised, of Providence making a minor adjustment, and Providence continues to work in such a crude and simple way as to be largely beneath the complicated notice of the human mind.

The *Gloria's* motor tender with the four men arrived from Leith at its appointed time, and the men bore elaborate evidence of having been drunk, rigidly according with the captain's calculations. They did not bring the lettuce and the ice because they said they expected to find the *Gloria* ashore. That is of no importance.

After Mr. Sneed had given the three fishermen some battered canned goods and a very small check, we towed the *Gloria* back to Leith, where everybody prepared to go home, eight hundred miles by railway, because they were much unnerved.

I cannot record what Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Sneed said, because they did not say anything. Mr. Spiers said a great deal, but it was to the same effect.

Miss Roche and Mr. Simpson and the pianist, who were of largely similar make-up, though of diverse education, had periodical fits of shameless and unexplained laughter. Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Sneed, and Mr. Spiers, who, in their turn, were of somewhat similar make-up, and similar education, did not appear to see anything funny at all in the events gone past, but carried themselves with sadness. But Mrs. Sneed was a changed woman, just the same. Her veneer had crackled and been flayed off and her unprotected soul had been exhibited to certain human beings with retentive memories, highly trained powers of recounting things and no reasons for concealment. She knew that Toronto, Montreal, the Eastern townships, and the outmost islands might as well have been present also. She was never really the same any more. I saw her often, and I know. This was one of the ends to be desired.

In the morning light Miss Hilda Roche bloomed like a rose in the face of the unveiled sun, but Mrs. and Miss Sneed looked old and exceedingly weary. Improvements on Nature do not seem to stand Nature's tests. But I know that Miss Sneed slept that night without

the aid of drugs, which was another end to be desired.

Then between Miss Roche and Mr. Spiers there was a great gulf fixed, so that neither of them might cross over to the other in the least. She recalled some one who might have been awakened suddenly from a very bad dream. But there could be no doubt that she was fully awake. And this was another end to be desired. Once I think she started to say something to me about it, but before she had gone very far her voice checked and she laughed and ran away. I did not ask for any further particulars. We have been great friends ever since.

At half past twelve, noon, she received a telegram from Halifax, from the wife of the D. O. D. L.— which is a purely Imperial title and means the District Officer of Defense Lights — who was a friend of hers. The telegram did not explain how it knew she was in Leith, but it asked her to go to Halifax for a visit, and at twenty minutes past two she went. The pianist went with her as far as the rear platform of the last car, where he hung till the train had attained to a speed of possibly fifteen miles an hour.

"Freddy thinks," he said to me, "that Halifax is a nice place, and that the air in Halifax would be a good thing for Freddy's health. It 's funny that he did n't think of that before. Freddy does not wish to go codfishing any more. He wishes the *Rorqual* to go to Halifax instead."

The Sneed family and Mr. Spiers started for Mont-

real on a train that went later in the day. They arrived safely.

Mr. Spiers and Miss Sneed have been married in St. George's. Whether that was an end to be desired I do not know.

The *Rorqual* went to Halifax and the *Gloria* went home.

Providence had doubtless in the meantime turned His attention to other things.

## THE NEW POWER

THIS was in the times recently gone past, when the marine two-cycle, internal-combustion motor was not trustworthy.

The wave of the new power was sweeping outward over the whole continent of North America: down the Mississippi, with the shoal-draft fleet, to Memphis and on to New Orleans; down the East coast by the inside course and the open sea to the Florida Keys and into Florida bayous until it broke in foam and spray and artificial thunder at Lake Worth; up from San Francisco and Seattle, where, never being able to forget Deception Pass and Cape Flattery in a westerly gale, they built their engines heavy, through the Strait of Georgia, till it set the silence throbbing in the mountain-ringed fjords of British Columbia, and heard, a lonely sound, its own echoes from North Pacific bergs grounded on reefs in the Bering Strait; eastward and westward through the lakes and by a hundred thousand rivers, till it followed, town by town, down the St. Lawrence and into the open gulf, where it was met by itself — that had come round the other way, town by town up the Atlantic, and went on through the fog beyond, to Labrador and Hudson's Bay, where there were no towns,

only men that travel by water, and not very many of these.

This being the North American continent, each man who designed an engine thought that his thought had never been thought by any man before; and in North America every new thought or thing is given to the public, whether it has any worth in the sight of heaven or not. Now, a great gasoline engine, like a great prayer, must either be crystallized out of many conventions, each of which has been formed by being broken several times,— as they build ships in England,— or else it must be made by a genius. This latter is the poorer way, but necessary when things are new and there are no conventions to go by. And as this sort of man believes in no conventions that he does not invent himself, and as the call was very great, and as geniuses are very few, most of the engines were very wonderful and very pathetic, and the enduring public were the sufferers, as ever.

Here follows one of the least of the instances. On the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and because it is at the mouth of the River Fore (which you will not be able to find on the map), is a town named Foremouth. Twelve miles up the Fore is another town which works particularly in iron and steel and coal, named Granton Place, though the people of Foremouth, who do not work particularly in anything, call it Smutville. For reasons no greater than this, in the manner of neighboring towns, Foremouth and Granton Place are not friends.

The inhabitants of both towns are mainly of Scotch descent, but Foremouth had at least one man who was true Scotch, and showed no sign of descent of any sort. He was an M. R. C. S. and an L. R. C. P., and after that he was a doctor of medicine of the University of Edinburgh, and his name was Campbell. He was a man of independent character of the Scotch type, only somewhat accentuated, if possible. He had taken his Edinburgh degree with great honor to himself and his native town, and with an assured and lucrative practice at home, had immediately come to Canada, where he was advised to go West. He came East. The Doctor's appearance was distinguished by a trimmed beard and powerful spectacles, and being unmarried, he lived and differed with an aunt, Miss Jane Campbell. He was a man with a quiet and awful pertinacity, and he never permitted his practice to interfere with any duty or diversion he felt he owed the public. So, if anybody had ever thought about it, the meeting between him and the mysterious two-cycle engine of even that late day was an event to be looked forward to with great joy.

The wave approached by way of Granton Place. Small, unclean boats breeding blue smoke and odors and curious sounds came out of the mouth of the Fore and disported themselves in Foremouth Harbor, where they went or refused to go, as occasion suggested. Besides, in the way of cheap two-cycle engines, they made startling noises of two sorts which Foremouth learned were called respectively backfires and explosions in the

exhaust. During these activities Foremouth made no sign, but moved about in sail-boats and two steam-launches, and judged that the noises, though terrifying, were harmless, as, in every case while they were proceeding, the person who sat over the engine, in the midst of the thunder and the smoke, looked toward the far horizon or evinced an interest in other boats.

Then a ninety-foot twin-screw cruiser call the *Pilgrim* came to live in Foremouth. Her engine-room held two fifty-horse-power four-cycle engines that moved her with the silence and regularity of the tides. Foremouth was impressed. And then immediately came an agent from Ontario, introducing a double-opposed four-cycle obsession of the sort that has its exhaust-valve spring held up by a washer, and the washer by a split pin stuck through a hole in the valve-stem. Its reputation had been founded on its irreproachable performances when mounted on the blocks at an exhibition. He explained the finest engine on earth to a patient and receptive audience. Like the gentleman with the extract of soap-tree bark and the vampire bat, he "had also" a nickel-plated two-cycle devil that an ineradicable habit of kicking back had distinguished as "the arm-breaker" over half the continent. He selected Walter Deane, Foremouth's second blacksmith, as the man best fitted by nature to deal with the latter, and sold him one. Then, with Mr. Deane's permission, he set up a specimen of each kind in the shop as an exhibit for the now thoroughly aroused public, and left them to argue for themselves. They did.

Mr. Deane was a powerful man of six feet two, and after firmly bolting down his own engine to a box that had formerly contained horseshoes, he essayed to start it. While he was connecting up its circulation to a tub of fresh water, a piece of very flexible lead pipe to an improvised gasolene tank that sat on a high stool, and a spark-coil to the cells of a dry battery, the audience was gradually assembling and finding comfortable seats on the benches and around the forge. It included a hereditary engineer and the Doctor, very quiet and unobtrusive, whose presence was noted softly as a pregnant and significant event.

In the meantime, Mr. Deane, as the Foremouth representative of the firm producing the finest gasolene engine in the country, explained obscure theoretical points to any questioner. He explained the make-and-break spark-coil and tested it. His arm jerked upward. The coil was patently in excellent condition. Some one choked. Mr. Deane regarded him with a fixed smile. He turned on the gasolene, and approached the engine with a crank.

"Now we'll start her," he said, speaking lightly, as of an inconsiderable thing. He heaved once. There was an ear-splitting report, a flash of bluish-yellow flame, and he found himself standing empty-handed, while the odor of burnt gasolene spread on the air. One small boy slid quietly from a window: everybody else assisted in the search for the crank. They found it under the bellows.

Mr. Deane took it gingerly, while he examined his

left hand with some care. He approached the engine more tentatively.

"We got an explosion, anyway," he remarked.

"Ye did," said some one on a bench, intending only to be encouraging. Mr. Deane regarded him at some length, when some one else choked slightly again, and he shifted his gaze to this last offender.

"What are you cackling at?" he said. The cackler furnishing no reply, he fitted the crank again and heaved, but without result. After three minutes, with an old capstan for extra weight on the box, and two men to hold it, another man offered to try. He sweat freely for two minutes, to the accompaniment of obscure sounds from the interior of the machine and a faint smell of gasolene. There was no other effect. The crowd had gathered closer when Mr. Deane took the crank again. "Stand clear!" he said, and threw his weight on it.

The nickel-plated devil went. The sputter of its exhaust roared in their faces, and the box on which it stood danced with the vibration. For one critical instant it ingeniously balanced itself on one corner; then it fell over. The nebula that represented the fly-wheel, revolving a full fifteen hundred times a minute, struck the floor, and engine and box together leaped straight at Mr. Walter Deane's throat. Mr. Deane turned and fled, and the crowd dissolved away as the mist at sunrise, while the engine and box, like a motor wheelbarrow, pranced across the shop, followed precipitately by a flock of batteries, spark-coil, and gasolene tank, until it came

to rest against the wall. There it continued to go for several seconds, then miraculously stopped.

Mr. Deane, who found himself in the open air with the others, went back into the great smell of gasolene, and, after righting the overturned tank, approached the recumbent engine. There came a voice from among the heads at the door:

"Don't go too near her, Wattie. She'll get up and knock yer block off!"

"Aw, shut up!" he rejoined; then he considered the wreck. "Nothing but the igniter-rod bent. That's lucky." The crowd ventured back. They connected her up again, and weighted down the box with castings. Mr. Deane took the crank with more confidence. Six seconds later, as a gunner would put it, his trajectory cut the surface of the water — in the tub that blacksmiths use to cool things in. Mr. Deane arrived approximately in a sitting posture, and his displacement was sufficient to remove a great deal of water from the tub, and distribute it among the nearest of the spectators. Mr. Deane rose with some struggle, but the majority of the spectators failed to rise at all, and lay about on the benches and on the floor in the position of men being strangled. Mr. Deane stood in a pool of black water, and for a full minute his language was positively frightful. Then, with a hand held tenderly on his hip, he regarded the writhing figures.

"Think ye're damn funny, don't ye!" he said fiercely. One man rolled over on his back, drew up his knees, and pounded his boots alternately on the floor.

This was the only response. Later they recovered sufficiently to get up. They were offered the crank; there were no takers. Mr. Deane felt called upon to go home and change. This ended the experiments for the day. That evening the story, with elaborate details, could be heard on any corner of the front street, and when Mr. Deane came downtown after supper, the entire populace seemed to wish to know whether he had "got her started." His answer was invariably to the effect that he had not had time to adjust her yet, but that he would not be so busy to-morrow.

Foremouth, all innocent and uninformed, stood blind, never knowing that a sign had been given her. It was the beginning of the marvelous explanatory fluency that develops in the owner of the cheap two-cycle engine. It was the sign of the beginning of the trouble. The psychology of it is this: it is not that the owner in his secret heart admires the engine,— he has seen the heavy four-cycle running quietly all the long season through,— but the obstreperous little devil is his, to protect and justify against a gibing and jeering public; so he learns to lie incontinently, and, in the regrettable end, to believe the lies himself. Mr. Deane, at one time later in the season, so far forgot himself as to be frank about it. It was at the end of a race in which Providence had directed that his engine should go without interruption, and longer than it had ever gone before. He won. He addressed the engine tensely and just above his breath, but was overheard.

"You bitch," he said, "if you 'd 'a' stopped, I 'd 'a'

taken ye round a bend in the river, and kicked the cylinders off ye!" The concentrated sweat of all that season's cranking was collected there; but it is to be noticed that he said he would take her around a bend in the river.

Mr. Deane's engine was apparently tamed by kindness, or at least by a child. It was on the following day, when he was out of the shop for a few minutes. Three youths had been investigating, and one experimentally rocked the fly-wheel. There was a sound of cannonading from within, and the three appeared, fleeing for the dock as for their lives. Mr. Deane entered. The engine was running in the midst of a quivering thunder-cloud, and appeared to be more or less amenable to control by small levers that showed faintly in the heart of the disturbance. She was permitted to run, and the crowd of the day before gathered again and marveled. From that moment onward the box on which that engine sat bore the marks of human blood, ever increasing in number. The season was properly opened.

The *Pilgrim* had arrived in the autumn. All this was in the winter-time and the very early spring. Then came an aberrant specimen, the before-mentioned hereditary engineer, a convert from steam. He studied Mr. Deane's engine and disliked the design, so he studied the designs in a yachting periodical. He realized the mechanical hopelessness of most of them, and he finally sent for one weighing forty pounds, for which were claimed the most astounding capabilities, and for which he paid

ninety-seven cents a pound. When it arrived, he retired to a machine-shop with it, took out its vitals, and profoundly altered them. He remodeled a rowboat, put the engine in, and dropped the boat in the harbor among the ice-cakes in April, the first of the Foremouth motor-boats. For two months that engine went, forward or backward, fair weather or foul, with never a skip, until all Foremouth wondered. Then her owner, being a hereditary engineer, knew that her poor, foolish, little pump was played out, and that the time of her general dissolution was at hand, and sold her to a man who, on account of her reputation, insisted on paying two and a half times what she had cost.

This incident is unimportant in itself, but it served to bring the Doctor to a decision, and this is not unimportant. Nothing is unimportant that breeds admiration or merriment.

The Doctor explained that he purposed building a small but seaworthy boat, in which, if he wished, he could take a run over to Prince Edward Island. "Or Newfoun'lan'," suggested a bystander. He said no; that was too far, amid murmurs of dissent. He fixed upon the dory type as suitable, and a boat-builder began making models with a jack-knife. As she grew, she developed a turtle-back over her bow that formed a tunnel into which two men might crawl, and at the forward end of which lived the gasolene tank. This her owner dignified as a "hunting cabin." He took public advice as to what type of engine he should get,— the public were consulting experts by this time,— and, disregarding it, im-

ported an unknown, and, in the light of later events, apparently an unknowable, machine. She gave great trouble from the first instant, and so formed a suitable objective on which a Scotch character could react.

The day of the Doctor's launch elicited the most enthusiastic interest from the public. The Doctor's launches always did. Several times during her construction the dory had been altered, until, at the end, the last trace of resemblance to the original design had faded away, and she was as much of an anomaly as had been any of the Doctor's sail-boats. To enhance her already notable sea-keeping qualities, the Doctor had had both her bow and stern raised, until the earlier arrivals noted her resemblance to a Malay flying proa, and said so. The remark met with instant approval, and the *Flying Proa* she became. This was a convenience, as she was never formally named.

The first arrival was Jumps (as nearly as it could be gathered phonetically), a ubiquitous dog that partook of the characteristics of a dachshund and an Irish water spaniel, except that he was black. The only effective description of him had been given by Henry Simpson, Mr. Deane's chief rival in the blacksmithing business, who had said that he looked like a cross between an astrakhan cap and a length of stove-pipe. The second arrival was George, the owner of Jumps, a small boy of mechanical tendencies, and, later, second engineer of the *Flying Proa*. Then they came by twos and threes, and included Mr. Deane, Henry Simpson, the engineer of

the *Pilgrim,* whose name was Dennison, a plumber with two assistants,— to connect up the quarter-inch gasolene pipe,— and the Doctor's aunt, who was a lady of retiring but firm disposition, and who disapproved of the whole business. With possibly one or two exceptions, everybody at one time or another walked on Jumps, whose yells brought other dogs.

The actual launching process inadvertently included George, who, at the last moment, became involved in the *Flying Proa's* coiled new painter, and followed her, feet first, down the ways and out to sea, taking the painter with him; so that the *Proa* had to be salved and towed in with a flat, the Doctor meanwhile addressing George from the roof of the hunting cabin. Great enthusiasm. The *Flying Proa* was brought alongside the wharf, and while the plumbers connected the gasolene pipe, the engineer of the *Pilgrim* was commissioned to do the wiring. The Doctor, standing precariously on the extreme bow with a five-gallon gasolene can in one hand and a funnel in the other, prepared to fill the tank, and dilated on the advantages of the jump-spark system of ignition. He had a jerky manner, and spoke in interrupted cascades. Mr. Deane differed at once, and argued with deliberation in favor of the make-and-break. The crowd drew up in appreciation.

Now, when George came aboard he left the forward deck very wet. Also, the *Pilgrim's* engines had make-and-break ignition. It may have been professional feeling or it may only have been that the engineer of the *Pilgrim* was a humorist. There may have been collusion

inside the hunting cabin. In any case, after the discussion had got to the point where the Doctor had told Mr. Deane that it was only his ignorance that made him talk like that, he bent down to put the funnel in the tank, straightened up with a horrible sound, half-groan, half-yell, struggled at an impossible angle for a visible instant, to the accompaniment of a shriek from Miss Jane, and went overboard, taking the can of gasolene with him. Evident joy on the part of George and more enthusiasm of the crowd, who insisted on rescuing the can of gasolene first. Henry Simpson, smoking, spoke to his nearest neighbor.

"Everything 's goin' off beautiful so far."

"Beautiful!" was the reply; "and there 's likely more to come."

"Or go," added Mr. Simpson. He spoke with insight.

The three plumbers and Mr. Dennison backed, red-faced, out of the hunting cabin (it was suffocating), and evinced their surprise at the disturbance. They were in time to hoist the Doctor aboard.

"I got a shock," he coughed, running salt water.

"So did we," said Mr. Dennison.

"I mean 'n electric shock."

"An electric shock?" repeated Mr. Dennison, looking at the plumbers as a man seeking justification. "Could n't be. Is n't possible."

"Could n't be," repeated the second assistant. However, they promised to look for a leak. The Doctor's attention was called away by Miss Campbell's insisting

that he go home and change, but the Doctor advanced the salt-water theory. She said further that if he did n't go, she would. He said she might. She did.

It had been suggested several times that he set up his engine and test it before putting it in the boat. He explained that the engine was adjusted and tested before leaving the factory.

It was sunset when everything was prepared. The onlookers had found comfortable seats, and cheerfully stayed away from supper, trusting in further developments. An old gentleman named Didder had retired to a broken place in the wharf, had taken off his boots and socks, and was improving the occasion by soaking his feet in the sea. Aboard the *Flying Proa* there were Jumps and George, the Doctor and Mr. Dennison, Mr. Deane, the plumber, and the two assistants. An expectant silence settled down when the Doctor rocked the fly-wheel, according to instructions. There was no result. The crank was applied. There was no result. It was discovered that the engine was getting no gasolene, and the pipe was forthwith disconnected at the tank. The union was stopped with shellac. The engineer of the *Pilgrim* suggested waiting until daylight. The Doctor said no. The master plumber went down, bearing an acetylene bicycle-lamp, and the assistants followed, bearing two pieces of iron wire, and looking covertly toward the door. The Doctor went also, and they probed that union. The engineer of the *Pilgrim* unostentatiously went ashore, and retired a short distance up the wharf, taking with him the *Pilgrim's*

owner and a girl, who had joined the throng in the twilight.

"I don't think it 'll be very bad," he said, "but he 's hunting for gasolene, and it 's likely he 'll find it in less than a minute." Together they watched the faint white light that showed through the two small ports in the *Flying Proa's* hunting cabin. Then silently it changed to a brilliant yellow.

"They 've got it," murmured Mr. Dennison. How four men passed out through that door in the time was amazing. They came forth locked together as though welded into a mass by the heat of the explosion — and there was no explosion. In the cockpit they broke apart, and as yellow fire puffed out of the cabin, the two assistants went overboard without a whimper.

The master plumber climbed ashore, and was promptly knocked down by Mr. Didder, who had broke cover and was pattering up the wharf like a barefooted boy, leaving his boots and socks to the mercy of the rising tide. The master plumber rose to explain that a little gasolene came through and caught fire, but that he had shut it off. The Doctor stayed aboard with George and threw in water until the fire was under control, when George entered alone and pounded it out.

The plumber's assistants crawled up the wharf without help, Henry Simpson asking them if they expected to be out long, and the rest putting the traditional questions as to the state of the water, until they became irritable and went home.

Mr. Deane found himself at the back of the crowd

without any distinct recollection of the details of his translation. The crowd itself was in ecstasy, the only fear being that the Doctor would feel that he had accomplished enough for one day; but the Doctor seldom disappointed. The fact that concerned him was that the plumbers with the iron wire had struck gasolene. All was accomplished. He was ready to start. During the fire, Jumps had remained unperturbed on the forward deck. George had also qualified as a hero; the rest were ashore. It was entirely meet that he should start with such a crew.

"Well, I think we are ready for our trial trip," he announced, addressing no one. The crowd hung in expectant festoons. The acetylene bicycle-lamp had been salved. Its light was turned on the engine, which sat smiling in the cockpit, and a boy was instructed to cast off the lines. Some one hanging over the coping spoke:

"If ye 're round the Ma'dalens, an' there 's any fog, don't forget the gun on the Bird Rocks." This remark was disregarded. George held the lantern, and the Doctor knelt. Under the influence of his cranking, the *Flying Proa* moved slowly out past the end of the wharf, and, amid a breathless silence, drifted up harbor into the dark with the rising tide. For four hours the light moved slowly about within a few hundred yards of the wharf, and in all that time there came not one indication of life from the engine. Sometimes, borne over the still water, drifted in the sound of voices in conversation, and once, for a period of al-

most a minute, George's voice arose in blasphemy. The remnant of the crowd, who had not succeeded in finding a method of getting afloat, and straining to hear, deduced that the electrical apparatus was still intact. There were also sounds as of hammering, and at last, after midnight, when the carbide had burned out in the lamp, the Doctor accepted a tow from a rowboat, and came ashore. Evidently touched by the pertinacity of the remnant of the spectators, who still held on, he explained that he was "getting too much gas."

"Can't ye shut it off?" asked some one.

"Of course I can."

"Then why did n' ye?"

The Doctor threw a pitying glance at the questioner and strode up the wharf, while George was received into the bosom of the bystanders and plied for details. The recital went on amid whoops of merriment for half an hour, then drew to a drowsy close. "I got mad and tired of crankin' at last, an' told him his engine was no good. That made him wild, an' he says: 'Ye damn little whelp, have n't ye got sense enough to keep yer feet off o' them wires!' An' just then the light went out. I guess that 's what saved me."

At seven o'clock the next morning the Doctor was down with a bag of surgical instruments, notably bone forceps and probes. Everybody available made a point of superintending. When he removed his coat, a voice suggested that he had better not give her chloroform, as she seemed to have a weak heart. The Doctor's reply was brief and discourteous. George, being of a

forgiving disposition, turned up, and assisted through the whole of that glaring day.

The Doctor's engineering methods were unique. For the most part he disregarded monkey-wrenches and spanners as requiring too much fitting, and handled nuts and cap-screws with gas-pliers, or, in stubborn cases, a stillson. Mistrusting the construction of his spark-plug, he tore it to pieces, and inserted one or two iron washers where he thought they would be useful. After this the plug miraculously refused to spark, and had to be permitted to return to its original condition. It suffered in the struggle, and from the outside was unrecognizable. The vaporizer, after a stubborn fight, gave up its internals, which were filed and replaced, but to no effect. A second sun went down on the *Flying Proa* at rest.

For four days after this the whole business life of the lower street was demoralized. No man might make an appointment with any assurance of being able to keep it without being summoned to the wharf to see the Doctor start. A dozen times the word went around, and a dozen times it was a false alarm. On the fifth morning everybody came down to find the *Flying Proa* at sea. She was lying three or four hundred yards from the shore, apparently at anchor. Whether she went out under her own power or whether she was rowed out before dawn (with a view to becoming inaccessible), was never known. George and Jumps and the Doctor were equally uncommunicative. The many who used to spend their time fishing mackerel, when

there were any mackerel to fish, took bottled drinks with them, rowed out, and tied up alongside. They towed the *Proa* ashore at sunset, the Doctor explaining that there was a short circuit between the primary and secondary in his spark-coil.

There was no end in sight, and the strain was making the town nervous and irritable, and the back of the Doctor's neck was so badly sunburned that he had to keep a heavily powdered cloth on it, when one afternoon the hereditary engineer went aboard and studied things from the top of the hunting cabin. He asked if he might try her, and the Doctor ungraciously said something to the effect that he might do whatever he saw fit. The engineer reached into one or two inaccessible places, then turned the fly-wheel. The engine broke into song, there was a roar of troubled water under the *Flying Proa's* stern, and leaving the frayed end of her painter hanging from a mooring-ring in the wharf, she careered out on the bosom of the harbor. The engine gradually slowed until the *Proa* moved at a good five miles an hour, and ran steady so until she was half a mile out in the stream; then it came to rest.

"Trapped, by thunder!" said some one in the crowd, referring to the hereditary engineer. They could see them cranking, and at dusk they towed them ashore. After this the *Flying Proa* went at widely separated intervals, but never at more than five miles an hour. Ordinarily she drifted up with one tide and down with the next, taking advantage of favorable slants of wind for side runs, and often wayfarers would

stop in the streets of Foremouth, where one could get a glimpse of the water, and watch a curious boat lying far out in the path of the sun, with a man's shoulders heaving up and down in her cockpit.

If public interest slackened at all, it was fully renewed on the day Miss Jane took her first trip. She brought several ladies for moral support. They knew nothing of gasolene boats and distrusted them as fully as did Miss Campbell, but feeling their responsibility, they kept a firm upper lip. To those on the wharf it was patent that Miss Campbell was in a highly nervous condition when she stepped, or rather fell, into her seat in the stern. Being stout, she visibly altered the trim of the *Flying Proa,* and this she noted with apprehension. For her special benefit the Doctor had erected over the cockpit a green canopy top of his own design, and apparently of his own construction. In general principle it was a great umbrella, with the exception that, instead of being round, it was square, and with only four ribs, one to each corner. It was supported on a six-foot mast, lashed to a thwart, and the corners were guyed down with four ornate green cords. Of this invention, from the first moment, Miss Jane conceived an inordinate terror. The fact that it would not have made a good sail for the *Proa* in a typhoon made no difference. However, it served one purpose: it kept her attention away from the engine. Besides, the *Proa's* engine from the first was never violent, but always mild and desultory, and if less desultory, became milder as time went on.

On the day in question, through some trifling accident, it started without difficulty. The *Flying Proa* came around the end of the wharf with the Doctor, George, Jumps, Miss Jane, three other ladies, the engine, the mast and four guys of the canopy top, and one unclassified small boy, all in the cockpit. They had proceeded perhaps seventy-five yards, and on the wharf Henry Simpson had just remarked, referring to the exhaust, that it sounded as if some one aboard had asthma, when the coughing ceased and the *Proa* stopped. The Doctor bent down to make some adjustments, and must have fouled some of the rigging of the canopy top, for that protection instantly collapsed. The mast remained, and the top came down, as does an umbrella, and infolded the cockpit and its contents. From the sounds that proceeded from beneath it was apparent that Jumps had been stepped on again; then there was a disturbance of the tent, the *Proa* rocked violently, and scream after scream came muffled upon the air. A moment later the canopy top began to unfold itself, raising its wings aloft until it barely disclosed the *Proa's* crew, when it instantly collapsed again, Miss Jane ducking as it came. This time there was a severe silence beneath, and, after some seconds of this, while the canopy remained motionless, it gave further evidences of recovery, and finally spread itself out like a full-blown rose. Herewith Miss Jane could be heard arguing that either that top or she would go ashore. The Doctor expostulated, explaining that it could not happen again, but to no avail. When he finally gave

They accepted a tow . . . and returned to the wharf

in, neither George nor he could start the engine, and when, at the end of half an hour, it went, the *Flying Proa* had drifted far up the harbor.

In the meantime the canopy had behaved admirably, and had afforded so much shelter from the sun that Miss Jane said they might try to get along with it. But the Doctor said no: if it was a real danger, it must go ashore. They would take it back to the wharf. The day was calm, and the tide was rising. The wind was light, off shore. The engine stopped thirty-two times by count, and George and the Doctor ran sweat. Five times the *Flying Proa* was within a stone's throw of the wharf, and five times she drifted away. At slack water, about two o'clock, she made an extra struggle to reach it, and at one critical moment attained to within fifty yards. Then the tide turned, and she was swept down harbor at something between one and two knots. All the afternoon she fought up-stream, refusing all assistance. Her engine stopped less frequently than before because it was less frequently started. Toward six o'clock the *Proa* was visibly losing ground, and there was every evidence that George and the Doctor were gradually growing weaker, and at seventeen minutes after seven, having lost a third of a mile in twenty minutes, they accepted a tow from the hereditary engineer, and returned to the wharf. As they came alongside they formed a striking picture. The Doctor rose as an old man, and painfully coiled a heaving-line; Jumps lay in profound slumber on the extreme forward deck; George sat huddled up on a seat,

as one from whom the spirit has utterly departed; Miss Campbell, gripping the cockpit coaming with both hands, sat stiff and purple with suppressed feeling; and the guests talked together of the charm of the sunset. When they had tied up, Miss Campbell climbed ashore without the assistance of the Doctor, and accompanied the ladies up the wharf; George recovered sufficiently to curse all gasolene engines; and the Doctor explained that his mixture was still a little uncertain.

However, from this time forward the *Flying Proa* seemed to improve as to steady running. The Doctor was at once encouraged to wish to navigate the byways and estuaries that made inland from Foremouth Harbor. Now, these inlets were infested with eel-grass that wound up on an ordinary propeller, and strangled it into submission in a dozen yards. With a view to circumventing this new devil, he imported a propeller of remarkable design, known as a "weedless wheel." One of the experts wished to know whether that was "its natural shape, or whether it had been run over by a train?" It was guaranteed to ignore all types of marine vegetable growth. This it unquestionably did; but it had one defect. The experts were down in a body to see it tested, and after studying the behavior of the *Flying Proa* while under its influence, they rechristened it the speedless-wheel.

Even the Doctor came to realize the limitations of the new propeller outside its own sphere, and, as a consequence, he took to carrying a small, striped bathing-suit in the hunting cabin. Then, on the least

provocation on the part of the navigable waters, he would approach the nearest shore, retire to the cabin, don the bathing-suit, go overboard with a stillson and change propellers. The *Maple Leaf,* which ran between Foremouth and Granton Place, would frequently report the *Proa* with her stern aground and her owner working up to his middle in the sea.

The unchecked growth of this habit in the Doctor led to one of the most impressive scenes in which the *Flying Proa* ever took part. Miss Jane had gradually accustomed herself to long voyages, and on this occasion made up her mind to accompany the Doctor to Granton Place. They started early, and as things were going badly about noon, the Doctor decided to change propellers. He backed the boat in to a convenient bank until her shoe touched, got into the bathing-suit, took the stillson and the weedless wheel, and went overboard. The propeller was held on by one set-screw, which, at the moment, happened to be underneath and not accessible. To get at it, the Doctor seized the blades of the propeller and heaved it over. Inadvertently, as was frequent, he had left the switch closed; the gasolene he left on normally. There came a sound like something clearing its throat, the propeller jerked out of his hand, there was a roar of water in his face, and the *Flying Proa* departed with Miss Jane. The Doctor rushed after her, but to no effect; she was a shade the faster. When the water was up to his chin he stopped.

"Reverse the engine!" he yelled. "Shove over that

lever by the fly-wheel!" Miss Jane held the engine in great dread, but she approached it, and grasped the spark-plug. She let go with a shriek of astonishment.

"Shove over the lever!" roared the Doctor, waving a hand in demonstration. Miss Jane retired to the bow.

"I can't! I can't!" she wailed. "It won't go!" At this moment it pleased the fates that around a turn in the river should come the *Maple Leaf,* bearing an assemblage of Foremouth and Granton Place passengers. These were instantly petrified with amazement, but the *Maple Leaf's* captain, struggling to take in the situation, stopped when he got opposite the Doctor and asked if he might be of assistance. The Doctor made no response, but shouted at Miss Jane, now bound toward a reef on an uninhabited island, to steer. Miss Jane had never steered, though she had frequently watched the operation. She took the wheel.

"Steer for the *Maple Leaf,* and throw them a line!" The idea of "throwing them a line" bred in the lady a condition of speechless indignation. She looked once at the Doctor's head, then turned her attention to steering. It was more difficult than it had appeared to the onlooker. After completing two half-circles she discovered the universally acknowledged fact that the boat goes as you turn the top of the wheel. She approached the *Maple Leaf* in broad, threatening arcs, and the Doctor foresaw the impending collision.

"Never mind the *Maple Leaf,*" he whooped. "Bet-

ter not go there. Steer for me, auntie, and bring her in here." Miss Jane spun the wheel, the captain of the *Maple Leaf* rang two bells and the jingle, the *Maple Leaf* thunderously went astern, and the *Flying Proa* slid past her bow and bore down on the Doctor. The Doctor moved back a step until he could raise one arm from the water and wave it at a soft spot on the shore behind him.

"Go in there!" he yelled. Whether the prospect of running aground overcame her is not known, but, as she approached the shore, Miss Jane's steering became more erratic. The *Flying Proa* wavered between a selection of several spots on the shore, both above and below the Doctor, while that gentleman followed her every movement with anxiety. Then, as with a suddenly fixed purpose, she headed for the Doctor himself.

"Hi! Don't come so near!" he said nervously. Miss Jane panicked and ferociously spun the wheel in both directions, with magnificent effect. The *Proa's* high bow rode straight at the Doctor's head. The Doctor gazed for one frozen, incredible instant, then broke and fled for the shore, lashing the water like a wounded crocodile, with Miss Jane pressing him hard. A man up to his neck in the sea moves at a disadvantage.

"Seventeen to five she catches him!" said a spectator on the *Maple Leaf*. She did. The *Flying Proa's* forefoot slid up his spinal column and rode over his right shoulder, spurning him to port as she passed.

The Doctor disappeared from view, and the *Proa* grated ashore.

"Rammed, by ginger blue!" said the captain of the *Maple Leaf,* effusively. "The old woman got even with him for a lot of things that time." In something less than five seconds the Doctor stood up in the *Proa's* wake. He appeared as a human effigy done roughly in red mud. Miss Campbell was weeping hysterically in the cockpit. The *Maple Leaf's* passengers were dancing with sheer enthusiasm. The captain, a man of great control, repressed a tendency to sob, and leaned out the pilot-house window.

"Will I wait, Doctor?" The Doctor collected his breath for one second, then said tensely, "You can go to hell!" The captain permitted himself to smile, and proceeded to Granton Place.

## ORIENTED

THIS is a poor story, for it has no plot, and all stories written in America are supposed to have a plot. Nothing else matters. This story has a girl and a man and a chief event. Of these the chief event happened only in the ordinary course of things, and if the girl had not had one straight, white streak in her internal construction, probably it would not have affected her in the proper way, and there would have been no excuse for writing this at all. It may still be a question whether the girl was worthy of the event and so worth our valuable consideration. But whether she was worth it at the time or not,— and it seems improbable,— she doubtless became so in the end. Under the drilling of love and life many of this sort do when you never would have suspected it. The chief event itself was an artistic performance, and every artistic performance, however mean may be its little type, deserves worth in its appreciators; but, as has been said, if she had no worth, without doubt she acquired it, and, also without doubt, in the acquiring process the chief event helped her. So far this seems a bit abstruse.

Her name was Helen McNab. Her father was a Montreal broker. In 1869 he had walked in from a

creek seventeen miles up the Ottawa River to take a position as an office-boy — this story was written in 1907, which makes a profound difference —

I remember imperfectly a description given me by Winslow Whitman, late of Boston and India.

"Never been in the McNabs' drawing-room!" he said, with a face full of pity. "Your life is yet to be lived. They got stuffed birds in it, and a stuffed bear, an' a stuffed Injun, an' a full-sized Eskimo kayak. Then they got all sorts of chairs — chairs that belonged to Louis Quatorze, an' Louis Quinze, an' Louis Seize, an' I guess most of the other Louis. Some of their legs turn in, an' some of 'em turn out, an' the tops of 'em are all different; some like squash-pies, with a rim round 'em, an' some like meat-pies, with a lump on 'em; but you can't sit on any of 'em. In one corner it's Patagonia, in another it's the Petit Trianon, an' in another it's Hudson's Bay. Oh, your life is yet to be lived."

Miss McNab was the only daughter and she was pretty; but if you stripped her of the aura that surrounds every pretty girl, she was not attractive. In the ordinary course of things she went away to a boarding-school to develop her individuality, and when she came back she had it fully developed. She wore a suit covered with large black and white checks and a very flat sailor hat, and she walked in all respects like an ostrich. Later she had a bored expression, and there was something about her that led you to suspect she had never done enough to deserve it. She had

a nasal voice, which she used for producing an unfounded libel on an English accent and an unsorted collection of English sporting phrases. She had one slash scar on her left cheek from having collided with a tree one night on the Mountain on skis, and of this she was reservedly proud — she had followed fifteen others down the slope, and had come out blind-stunned at the bottom. She was always well groomed and manicured,— her nails were cut to a rounded point,— she was usually marceled, and she was gifted with the taste (which is the proper term for money when applied in this connection) to dress effectively, which she did. Any time she had left over from the operations involved in these peculiarities she used in maintaining her position, and this position was a complicated thing.

In North America there is a small but delicately perfumed army of young ladies who have made it their business to start an aristocracy. For certain obscure reasons, including the lack of aristocrats to fill it with, they have failed; but, instead, they have what is called a plutocracy, which is the same thing from the inside, though from the outside it is quite different. Montreal, like many other cities to the East and West and South, has an ornate nascent plutocracy, and Miss McNab's position at the time of this tale was on the extreme outer edge. The position of these plutocracies is uncertain, as they are maintained entirely by keeping just such young ladies from looking behind the Veil (where, by the way, there is nothing whatever —

though that is a secret), and so the plutocracy is usually busy, and the young ladies are busy as well.

Miss McNab was so busy that she had never had time to see a man. She believed she had danced with them. She unquestionably had decorated boxes at His Majesty's with them when they could afford it, and stalls when they could not. She had received violets from them, and large American Beauty roses. (The former she had worn, and they had wilted: the latter a maid had put in water, and they had wilted — at eighteen dollars a dozen.) She had dined at the Hunt Club with them, and at the Forest and Stream, for there is something about that brusque, sporting manner over the warmth of transparent chiffon that is irresistibly attractive to the uninitiated. But she had no idea in the world what a man was really like inside. She had her own imperious method of dealing with them, and that was to be all-sufficient for all time. It was her perfect, patent, impervious system, filled with raw oil and finished with three coats of best spar varnish. It was applied to all men alike that moved within her orbit, with variations to fit their prestige. Beyond her orbit there was a vague and unimportant region filled with college professors, navvies, photographers, and mechanical engineers, such as drive the *Lusitania,* and such like. Any one of these she would refer to as a man, but with a different tone, and that was the end of him. This was her whole philosophy: quite inconceivable, but approximately so. And yet, still more inconceivable, under all this there was doubtless the

stuff to make a woman that could sing songs to her own children, and the Magnificat to herself, and repeat the Apostles' Creed. This is a wonderful world.

Now, the man had recently come to Montreal from England. His father had been a great consulting engineer in Victoria Street, and, like all good consulting engineers, had died at his appointed time. He had been great even above riches, which is very great indeed, so he had been able to leave his son only a little under £6000, a strong engineering tendency, and two or three of the recognized varieties of common sense. Among these was not the one relating to the value of worldly possessions, and in five calendar months Mr. George Porteous Vaughan Morgan — for that was the son's name — had expended £5384-12-9; and of such beautiful quality was one sort of common sense he did have — the one that teaches how to deal gracefully with men and women — that with this comparatively small sum of money he made a notable disturbance in the great city of London, and his existence was admitted from the Circus to the foot of the throne. In fact, so great was this disturbance that its echoes have not altogether died away to this day. Afterward, having learned his lesson cheerfully and silently, and without a touch of melodrama, he came out to Canada with £600, and, following his engineering trend, joined himself to a company in Montreal whose business was to sell English automobiles to the Canadian public under the blessed advantages of the Canadian Preferential Tariff. Then of a sudden it seemed that all his reserve common

sense came into action at once, and immediately he began to prosper: for he was one of those rare specimens, an utterly adaptable Englishman. He even arose before eight o'clock in the morning.

Early in his Canadian career he collided with Miss Helen McNab at the St. Andrew's Ball. It so happened that no fewer than two of Miss McNab's bondmen had failed. One had been found by a two-years' widow of twenty-six, and the other had found a very charming young lady who belonged to one of the oldest French Canadian families and who had just returned from eighteen months in Paris; so there was no prospect of either of them coming back at all. So, partly by accident, which is our crude way of describing the methods of Providence, and partly through his own cheerful initiative, Mr. Vaughan Morgan received three dances. This, for Miss McNab of Montreal, was quite unheard of, and an excellent start.

Being an adaptable Englishman, Mr. Vaughan Morgan did not conceive that a two-step was made out of a mighty, automatic walk, or that a waltz consisted in turning in one direction over a limited area of floor at thirty-six revolutions per minute. On the contrary, he studied his surroundings, took thought, carefully put Miss McNab on her mettle by asking if she was very tired, and finished smiling and warm, with the lady in a more disheveled condition than she had ever been in public in her life. In the midst of her disapproval, she noticed a new, uncatalogued, pleasant, tingling sensation that apparently came out of an uncertain pink

haze. But in the face of a life-time of habit, this effect was ephemeral, and in the intervals between the dances she reverted to her normal condition, and languidly told Mr. Vaughan Morgan reserved tales of the doings of the frightfully smart set to which she belonged.

Now, Mr. Vaughan Morgan, having laid out with great intelligence £5384-12-9 in finding out what he could about London, was amazed at so much innocence so wickedly put, and, at the end of the third of those dances and interviews, went out into another room and served himself with bad claret lemonade a number of times, chuckling insanely all the while. Still, having come from a land where there are a million and a half surplus women, he was taken with the novelty of the imperious treatment,— with apparently so little to warrant it,— so two days later, being Sunday, he called. He found Miss McNab in her especial element, surrounded by a salon, and haughty beyond his most amazed conception; for he also came from the only democratic country in the world, and had seen no other.

Miss McNab's mother held a lorgnette under a transformation, and said that the St. Andrew's Ball was becoming frightfully mixed,— which is true of all balls, — and Miss McNab's brother, though apparently in his own house, conversed with a friend on the opposite end of the same divan, and regarded Mr. Vaughan Morgan as a stranger. This was all he got out of that visit, and when he arose, Mr. McNab, junior, and the friend smiled, and he departed in some wonder, but

with unabated interest. But Miss McNab imagined she saw a smile in the back of his eyes, and said a good-by that lacked poise — her first since she was six years old.

Working under the illogical rules that govern these things, Mr. Vaughan Morgan's interest continued to grow, and within three months, in spite of occasional contact, he had formed a most wonderful idea of Miss McNab. Now, the description of this young lady already submitted was dispassionate and, as far as it went, unquestionably correct from a mechanical point of view, which makes Mr. Vaughan Morgan's later idea all the more wonderful: but, put into English words, what he came to see was this:

Her height was the perfect height. (In this case it happened to be 5 feet, 6¾ inches, less 2¼ inches for sole leather and brass nails.) She was erect, beautifully balanced, and full-figured. She had glorious, indescribable golden-brown hair, with a shimmer that traveled like the shimmer of raw silk; walnut-brown eyes that shone and sparkled and had a way of looking up suddenly under lids that flickered for a second and shut down, leaving the effect of distant, silent summer lightning. (So far these were his precise words.) Her skin was clear and fair, but with an uncertain flush beneath that carried warmth from her finger-tips to her forehead, and at the least provocation blazed in her cheeks till you had to draw a slow breath to stand still. This was the overwhelming impression — tides and surges of glowing color; those eyes; and then such

hands! They were not particularly small, but altogether wonderful; well-balanced, soft, deft, and strong, the essence of all capability, adaptable, responding to every foreshadowed need, and accomplishing with all adequacy and finish, and with a touch that was perfectly sure, so that anything they had done could never conceivably come undone at all. When she played they flowed,— and she neglected Chaminade for Chopin,— and when she stopped they glided on their own irresponsible way, and were a source of danger to all mankind. But wonderful above everything else was her mouth: sensitive and mobile until it was heartbreaking to watch it. Every little thought that slipped through her mind, every little trend of a half-formed idea in fun or in earnest, in devilment or in pure play, was heralded there, and the corners slid up or down or quivered for one small second under the flutter of those eyelids until the alluring color came, stormed up, and you could only stand and groan. And then her voice was clear as crystal (*bis*) and she had a way of turning her words that was frightfully attractive. . . .

So Mr. Vaughan Morgan's conception went, in part; and, besides, into this creation he breathed the breath of life, making her into the flattering likeness of a real woman, with all the attributes,— prospective, useful motherhood, and the rest,— probably not one of which she then actively possessed.

And Miss McNab remained imperious and unscathed to the point of irritation.

Now for the sacrifice. In every artistic performance

there must be a sacrifice. If you paint a picture that attains to the line at the R. A., it is the canvas, the pigments, and a little boiled linseed oil. If you write a success of the season, it is several blocks of rag paper, half a pint of ink, and a suffering iridosmine pen-point. If you play the Second Rhapsody, it is an expensive grade of felt wearing on steel wires. In this case it was an English car called the Brunel, sold in Canada by the company to which Mr. Vaughan Morgan had joined himself. Her makers called her "The Engineer's Car," to distinguish her from the mass of cars that seemed to be dedicated to the public — or the devil. A glimpse into her transmission, or at the mighty teeth of her driving pinion (which is as important a part of a car as a hairpin is of a woman), or at the mightier hub and artillery spokes of her hind wheels, told you why, and why she was peculiarly fitted to be the sacrifice. And, besides, under her bonnet was an engine-room like the engine-room of an ice-breaker, with a centrifugal pump that might have come from Tangyes, with any spare space filled with a giant magneto; and all notably protected from the wet and gritty world outside. Her builders had laboriously come to the conclusion that an automobile was a dignified private carriage, and had gone forever from red bodies to the darkest of nile-green; so, aside from a certain massiveness, she was altogether deceptive, and no man would believe that she could rage furiously, for they called her but twenty horse-power. But of horses there are many sorts.

Here begins the introduction to the chief event. One April day, when the ice out of Lake St. Louis was moving down in rafts over the Lachine Rapids, and a Donaldson liner and the *Bellona,* with fruit, were waiting at Quebec for the breaking of the ice-bridge at Cap Rouge, Mr. Vaughan Morgan took out the twenty Brunel to demonstrate to a man who was preparing a summer home beyond Como.

And here it is necessary to digress for a geographical explanation.

Montreal city is on the island of Montreal, and Montreal island is in the mouth of the Ottawa, where that woodland river empties itself into the great St. Lawrence; for the Ottawa has a delta like the Nile and the Amazon. If you wish to get off the island of Montreal, you can go in two ways: by something that floats on the water or by a bridge. At this particular time in April there is nothing afloat except ice and driftwood, so you must go by a bridge, and of the bridges there are two kinds, railway and highway. The railway bridges are owned chiefly by corporations, and so lead everywhere it is desirable to go; and the highway bridges are owned chiefly by the Government, and so would lead nowhere except by what is called the express will of the people, and the people of North America, unlike the people of England, never express their will, but are governed directly, in as far as it may be necessary, by an overruling Providence, who does not build bridges.

It is twenty-three miles by road from the city of

Montreal to Ste. Anne de Bellevue, which is at the extreme end of the island of Montreal. Beyond is the flood of the Ottawa, with Isle Perrot, over two miles wide, breasting the current in midstream, and with Vaudreuil three miles away on the opposite shore. And Como, where Mr. Vaughan Morgan wished to be, is six miles beyond Vaudreuil.

The main lines of those two great corporations, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Grand Trunk Railway, run out to Ste. Anne, and, by high bridges resting on ponderous, ice-cutting piers, cross over to Isle Perrot. Across that elm-clad island, side by side, they strike a broad, straight, stately roadway, until, by other bridges with ponderous piers, they cross over from Isle Perrot to Vaudreuil, and go on their way into the West.

On the other hand, the highway, which is the property of the Government, comes out speciously by Lachine and through lakeside villages to Ste. Anne; and then, instead of proclaiming its inadequacy by turning down into the river and ceasing, swings nobly round the end of the island and returns to Montreal — as is proper — through the woods.

That is to say if you have attained to Ste. Anne by road, and wish to reach Vaudreuil-which-is-beyond-the-Ottawa, three miles away, you may go by little bridges over little rivers and so round by the city of Ottawa, two hundred and fifty miles; or you may go back twenty-three miles to Montreal, cross the River St. Lawrence by the Victoria Bridge, travel many leagues up-stream, cross the River St. Lawrence again at Val-

leyfield, P. Q., and travel eastward again many leagues to Vaudreuil, which is shorter. Or, to put it in all its nakedness, from Montreal, the greatest city in Canada, you cannot directly by road reach the mainland of western Quebec and Ontario, the most populous section of Canada, at all. This of course is an outrage, and if the island of Montreal were inhabited by the English as such it would be expressed as an outrage day and night without ceasing until the governments involved, helpless against importunity, like all governments, and for the sake of blessed peace, which is the ultimate aim and object of all governments, would signal their weariness, and immediately there would arise the sound of hammering on metal and the voice of the pneumatic riveter on girders at Ste. Anne.

All these great and seemingly irrelevant matters bear directly on Mr. Vaughan Morgan, for they show why, to reach Como, which is beyond Vaudreuil, he had to load the twenty Brunel on a flat-car, from which she was precariously navigated down three-inch planks at Como Station.

And here, to justify Mr. Vaughan Morgan's intelligence, it may be said that he had no conception what an Ottawa Valley road might be in the spring, but having alighted in four inches of snow water, he went forward in faith and demonstrated. He demonstrated through wasted, sooty snow-banks that melted without ceasing under a summer-blue sky. He demonstrated on a water-swept tundra where runnels poured over an ice-edge into a lake that in summer was a hay meadow.

He demonstrated over a half-frozen plowed field, preferring it to a four-horse-power stream which the owner assured him at other seasons was the drive, and he finished by taking his victim for what he called a spin on the main road. The spin consisted in leaping from mud-holes to muddy snow-banks, and swooping from snow-banks into mud-holes, and resembled nothing so much as navigating the Bay of Fundy in a high sea in an open boat.

"It is a bit sloppy-you-know — is n't it!" he said, with one eye overlaid with mud, and he went on talking reassuringly between gulps as the patient springs jolted their livers. In the end he careered away joyfully toward the station by himself, with one bent mudguard and an order for one $3500 car in his inmost pocket.

For that night the twenty Brunel was to have stayed in a shed, and he was to have gone into town on the 6:13. But the demonstration had been long, and the 6:13 was on time, and passed down, unflagged, toward Vaudreuil when he was still a quarter of a mile across the plain.

"Marooned!" Mr. Vaughan Morgan commented, and plowed ahead to interview the agent. The agent was already being interviewed. There were two young ladies and one young gentleman, and they appeared to have reached the station platform only the moment before. In any case, they paid no attention to the arrival of anything so trivial as a motor. One young lady was addressing the agent personally.

"You stupid fool, did n't you know we were coming, whether you could see us or not? Did you think we wished to stay out here all night — alone?" with a side-swept glance at the young gentleman. It was the voice of Miss Helen McNab, in heat. The agent was French Canadian, brief in temper, and not fully trained in deference. His reply was full of words. On the first count he tried to make plain that he was not a mind-reader. On the second, he pointed out that he had no method of judging.

"I don' know, me!" he said, waving his arms in the air. "Bot eef you don' came en time for y'r train — I s'pose *so.*" And he departed into the station, leaving Miss McNab white with wrath. (The McNabs had a house at Como, and the gods-that-desire-excitement had arranged that Miss McNab should choose this day in April to visit it for the purpose of suggesting improvements. She had brought with her, as a suite, Miss Yvonne Dacoste, because she was one step nearer the Veil, and very haughty, and Mr. Gerald Brian Glover, who had a thin and fair mustache, and was what she called a "nice boy.") Then, the mud storm having subsided, she saw the twenty Brunel and Mr. Vaughan Morgan. For one inexplicable second she was abashed: after which she had an inspiration. She consulted with the other two. "Watch me work this Englishman!" was the substance of it, though it was more beautifully put.

"How do you do!" she opened, and advanced toward

the edge of the platform. Mr. Vaughan Morgan shuddered, and bowed through his crust.

"Beastly walking, is n't it?" he said.

"Frightful," said Miss McNab, and properly introduced Miss Dacoste and Mr. Glover. "We 've lost our last train, and I *must* be in town at a quarter to eight. Won't *you* go and ask that man if there 's no other train — anywhere? — He 's been horribly rude." There was somewhat implied, but to that phase Mr. Vaughan Morgan seemed deaf and blind.

"Must?" he said, with the painful literalness of an Englishman, and took on a serious expression. She did not explain that it was bridge at Lady Sanderson's,— her first,— and, after all, that was very important. Her impervious system drove her ahead, full into the bosom of the unguessed future.

"Yes, must!" This tone was her final. Mr. Vaughan Morgan said, "Oh!" with a face full of consideration and a mind full of thoughts, and in a moment dropped over the unopened door into the mud and was in the station-house. In half a minute he returned, visibly anxious. There was a Grand Trunk train from Vaudreuil at 7:10.

"Arrives?"

"Bonaventure at five minutes to eight."

"That is much too late," she said regally, smoothing the wrinkles out of long, tan gloves, while Mr. Glover pulled his mustache.

"— Or we might get a special at Vaudreuil. I can take you down in the car — if you don't mind the roads

and the mud." Miss McNab held rigidly to her part. She did not mind anything. Mr. Vaughan Morgan absently eyed Mr. Glover's expanse of vicuña and satin and Miss Dacoste's hard-crowned, over-feathered hat (we remember the spring of 1907), and his smile almost broke out. But his face remained the face of one who realizes that something must be done immediately.

"I'm quite sure we shall manage it in some way, if we go at once," he said cheerily, leaning toward the sacrifice. Would Miss McNab like to ride in front?

She would.

He advanced on the crank, preoccupied, as a man thinking out things far ahead, while Miss Dacoste and Mr. Glover daintily climbed into the tonneau, with the manner of people who have certain misgivings, and seated themselves on luxurious cushions spattered with half-dry mud. Mr. Vaughan Morgan heaved, and a deep-seated tremor ran through the twenty Brunel. He moved to one side, and half the nile-green roof over the forward mysteries rose up and balanced itself in the air. For a dozen seconds Miss McNab watched his hand wandering amid complications — scarlet cylinders, glaring brass piping, and a whizzing aluminium fan, which she gazed at incuriously, not being a mechanic, after which the bonnet closed with a clang. The lady did notice that it was unlike the tinny snap of certain bonnets she had seen, but this was her only impression of unusual strength. This impression im-

mediately gave place to another more interesting. She painted a beautiful picture of Mr. Vaughan Morgan hiring a special at Vaudreuil, and taking her in in state; and she would see that he did it.

This last impression was not accurate. Mr. Vaughan Morgan had also a plan: which did not coincide in the least. How he thought it might forward his interests, or why he thought of it at all, I am sure I could never guess. Probably it was one of those first-flush impulses that have created that Outer-Empire title, Mad Englishman. Miss McNab's "must" had made it possible. He knew part of Miss McNab, and he knew how to foster that "must" until it became a fetish. If she ever gave in, his excuse would be gone. But, then, with a little urging, she would never give in till the trumpet blew and the earth dissolved away from beneath her feet.

In the meantime he slid into the driver's seat, pressed his foot on a pedal, and moved two levers that clicked. A hum rose up from somewhere, and Miss McNab felt herself being pushed back deep into the cushions. Then the hum ceased, and there was no sound but the hiss of snow water driven out in two clean sheets under the bows. The twenty Brunel, in a hundred-foot lake, was silently under way.

"Top speed," said Mr. Vaughan Morgan irrelevantly, with the appreciation of an enthusiast.

"It does n't seem very fast," Miss McNab commented, with a voice like an echo from a glacier.

"I should have said, 'Direct drive,'"

Miss McNab said, "Ah!" not knowing in the least what he meant.

"'Don't believe you have to be home by a quarter to eight at all," he continued, in great absence of mind. "What is it for?"

"*That* is my own particular business; but it is really important."

"Really!" said Mr. Vaughan Morgan, and this time a little child could see that he was impressed. He was a beautiful actor, and that expression of great anxiety came back. Miss McNab was satisfied. The first result took place at once. They had climbed from the lake into pure mud that played in two smooth fountains alongside, and they had arrived at the turn to the main road. On every car there is a little innocent-looking pedal that is called the accelerator. It has an unseen connection with the throttle, and is more potent than all the pedals of a cathedral organ. Turning into the main road, Mr. Vaughan Morgan rested his foot on this pedal ever so lightly. The twenty Brunel accelerated, and Mr. Gerald Brian Glover, in the tonneau, sat in Miss Yvonne Dacoste's lap. Miss McNab grasped Mr. Vaughan Morgan's left arm with a grip like the grip of a drowning man, and then let go as if it were red-hot iron. Mr. Vaughan Morgan, unnoting, ostentatiously fought with the steering-wheel, and, when the trouble had subsided, busied himself in apologizing lavishly to the tonneau. Mr. Glover was forcing the crown of his hat into shape, and Miss Dacoste looked ruffled.

"So sorry," he said; "but we skidded a little. This

mud is awfully treacherous, you know." Mr. Glover had been laying himself out not to say the unclean things that were in his mind, so his reply was at random and barely polite. Miss Dacoste vented a few crisp sentences of high-strung words and ferociously repinned her hat, and Miss McNab sat as rigid as Cleopatra's Needle. With her crew in this order, because, in his apology, Mr. Vaughan Morgan had disregarded the road ahead, the twenty Brunel rose up on the edge of an unwarned hollow with sides like a pit, pitched forward, heaving the suffering tonneau skyward, coasted on heated brakes over water-washed gravel into troubled water, rode for a second, dory-like, in foam, trod down a half-floating pole bridge, where her axles came up and smote her frame with blows like the blows of a sledge, and plowed out and upward on naked rock, with Mr. Vaughan Morgan transformed in the flash of an eye, laughing the joyful laugh of the English, that, in the midst of a great event, counts not the cost of anything, though life itself may depart in the next breath. It was all part of the Vaudreuil road, though in bad condition.

"*There's one more river,*" he sang softly, wiping the water from his eyes, and leaning forward to his work. "*An' that's the river of Jordan!*" This quotation had a deep and hidden significance, but he went on at once. "I say, did n't she take that beautifully?"

"She really did," said Miss McNab. It sounded more normal than anything he had ever heard her say,

and he managed to look once without being seen. She was holding the edge of the seat and the rim of her hat, and the color was blazing in her cheeks. From the tonneau arose a heated silence. They had seen water drifting back there in great clouds, and they forbore to look.

Then the twenty Brunel settled down to perform marvels.

Mr. Vaughan Morgan was a good driver,— they also are born,— and that day he drove with all his judgment, or as much judgment as he could use and get the Brunel's best speed under these terrible conditions. There was only one thing that might happen: the Brunel might burst — collapse — disintegrate — and settle back softly into a scrap-heap — or an impalpable powder — but if she did, in his opinion it was worth her cost. If she did not, he would end one day with satisfaction.

Sometimes her starboard tires traveled on an uneven ridge of sandy snow, and her port tires plowed in the worn sleigh-track and removed the water therefrom into the next field; and sometimes it occurred to her to change sides, and then, immediately afterward, to change back, and she alternated with great rapidity, so that she rolled like a torpedo-boat in a beam sea and terribly disarranged the passengers in her tonneau. Again, on a side hill, where the down-hill side of the road had melted first, her lower wheels ran in mud and her upper on ice, and she circled the hill with a list so heavy that you could hear the tonneau gasp, clinging

desperately to the windward rail. Sometimes, on the level, she struck into the remnants of the winter's pitches, with every ridge still frozen and as even as waves of the sea, and she rocked and bucked like an unhandled broncho until the floor of the tonneau, under its carpet, rose up and dropped back at every pitch with a clack like a slap-stick, and the passengers and their cushions were lifted five clear inches above the seat, and came down all braced for the next jump. There is nothing in the world more disconcerting to real dignity than just this sort of thing without any time allowed for rearranging yourself between jumps. It recalls a baby with a pain being danced on an inconsiderate knee. The effect is cumulative, and Miss Dacoste's New York hat, which was not fitted for motoring, pulled apart her brilliantine-clotted hair and hung itself over her left ear. Mr. Glover bounced like a muddy ball, and Miss McNab, still holding the edge of the seat and the rim of her hat, braced both feet against the sloping foot-board and labored with her expression.

Mr. Vaughan Morgan appeared to see none of these things, but stared at the ominous pathway ahead. At times it was glare ice, at other times it was gruel-thick mud, and in one hollow it was a duck-pond, with ducks and everything complete. There is a theory that neither the Cochin duck nor the domestic Mallard can fly. They flew that day — all but one. Whether he could fly, if he really cared to, will now never be known.

The twenty Brunel dazzled her occupants and became

a dream. Between endless snake-fences, dancing astern through tears, she climbed slopes that opened up on the left the flood-brown Ottawa in the afternoon sun, ever widening down into the Lake of Two Mountains; and on the farther side of these slopes she descended recklessly, dizzily chattering her lamps, and joyously pounding her tool-box up and down in its locker, until it sounded as if her vitals would certainly fly out on the road. She advanced on small farmhouses close by the roadside, and froze large French Canadian families into uncouth groups of statuary, until the horse collected himself and tried to back up the front of the barn, and then all was activity in her settling wake. In pure faith she rounded abruptly into unseen stretches of road, and once was cursed wonderfully by an agent for sewing-machines with a matched team of bays, which were stopped only by having to fight a five-barred gate. Sometimes she traveled straight, and sometimes she sidled like a shying horse under the saddle, but always in a rain of flying water or mud or worn-out snow. At all times she rocked and slued frightfully, and in certain brief moments she proceeded on two wheels. She dodged up-country chickens and she raced up-country dogs, one of which miscalculated and flew for a space like the Cochin ducks — but with the aid of the mud-guard. Twice her driver mistrusted the whole appearance of things ahead, and led her aside over squashy spring turf, through which she sucked her way until at last she rolled, mud-bathed, into Vaudreuil, where she was the wonder of the inhabitants, and up to

the station. Her passengers had passed from fear and disgust into amazement, and finally into apathy. The populace could see that it was something desperate, and exhibited no levity, though Mr. Glover's features were lost to the eye. Miss Dacoste was transfigured, and Miss McNab sat with tight lips. Mr. Vaughan Morgan had the situation by the throat.

"Sit still for one moment," he begged, and fled in the direction of the station-agent, to whom he talked aggressively for a few seconds. No one knows what he said. He came back running, but was stopped and drawn aside by a bystander from Isle Cadieux.

"De lady 's seeck?" he inquired, indicating Miss Dacoste, who had partly swathed herself in a gritty rug.

"Yes," whispered Mr. Vaughan Morgan, confidentially; "very," and mounted the step.

"Just as I thought," he said politely—"no special possible." And before he was fully settled in his seat, the twenty Brunel had gathered way. He swung her round the corner of the station, humored her softly over eighty-pound rails, and turned her down the main line, inbound, of the Grand Trunk Railway! A yell arose from far behind. He paid no attention. Three times he slowed to climb over switch-points, then opened up, and the twenty Brunel fled down the line, thuttering over sleepers toward the great bridges and the mighty Ottawa itself. Steering lightly with one hand, he found his watch and looked.

"Now we sha'n't be long," he said, addressing Miss

McNab's iron-bound countenance. All his anxiety had passed, and he was visibly appreciating the last of the red-gold sunshine and the soft, spring evening air. What Miss McNab might have replied is not known, for Mr. Glover burst through his mud-caked silence.

"What are you going to do? Where are you going?"

"Home," said Mr. Vaughan Morgan, looking at Miss McNab.

Miss McNab flushed. Into the heart of Miss Dacoste came a great fear, which she strove to conceal in a ladylike manner.

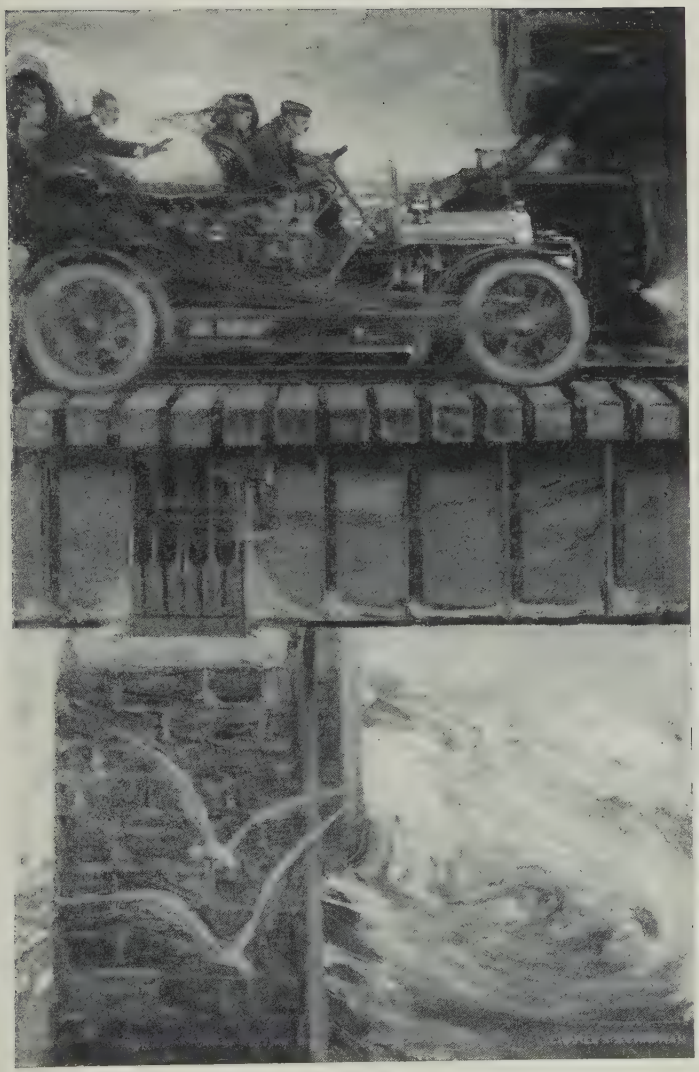
"Surely-the-man-is-not-going-to-take-us-across-the railway-bridges!" she exploded.

"Miss McNab must be home at a quarter to eight," said Mr. Vaughan Morgan, softly. A good driver does not turn his head. Miss McNab sat as undrawn as the London *Times,* and ahead there rose up a subdued and suggestive roar. It was the terrible sound of a six-hundred-mile river in flood. Miss Dacoste, in the trembling tonneau, covered her face with her hands, and Mr. Vaughan Morgan drove — like an engineer.

On the edge of the thunder stood a gang of incapacitated section men and a red shanty containing a gasolene engine and a three-bucket pump that filched a little of the Ottawa's water for the passing locomotives. Long afterward Miss McNab admitted that she would have been willing to live in that shanty for a very long time if she had been allowed to stay ashore. But she

gave no sign, and in the next breath the twenty Brunel was running in mid-air over open ties.

Ahead the way stretched clear enough, but that was a little thing. To the left, a few yards up-stream, hung the great mainline bridge of the Canadian Pacific Railway, breaking the oncoming flood, with every sharpened pier carrying a bow wave like a battleship, and singing its own song in the overwhelming roar. Between came down the waters, golden-brown and overlaid with foam, to break again in thunder on the piers that held up the twenty Brunel. Between the ties they could see the torrent pouring through far beneath, bearing an occasional log from some lost brough on the Gatineau. On each side was the raw edge — bare tie-ends; no guard-rail; nothing. Miss McNab thought of the car's steering-gear, which might be mutable, like all things human. She stared down at the water, which was unwise. For one little instant she went dizzy and sick. The Ottawa stood still. The Grand Trunk Bridge and the twenty Brunel, moving cornerwise, started up-stream, furiously chasing the tails of the stone piers of the Canadian Pacific bridge, that swirled on ahead like the sterns of battleships abreast, until she closed her eyes. (Mr. Vaughan Morgan, unseeing, saw this also.) When she opened them again, it was to keep them up, as one who would successfully waltz on skates. Ahead ranged the bare, wind-swept elms on Isle Perrot. To the right were more bare elms and swamp ashes, doubtless attached to summer islands but now bending like twigs in the midst of the brown flood. Later she remembered



Her thunder blended with the roar from below.

to the left, three hundred yards above, one small island, with a bare, white house, sheltered by nine pines and flanked by water-whipped scrub, and remembered praying she were there; until of a sudden she found herself on Isle Perrot, with the twenty Brunel heading down that four-tracked avenue through the woods, and Mr. Vaughan Morgan talking freely about the beauties of the country in spring, while the Canadian Pacific embankment rose ever higher on the left.

Mr. Glover, feeling the exigencies of the situation, sat up to say that the trip across the bridge was "magnificent," with which everybody undertook to agree, until the Ottawa's other branch hove in sight through the trees, with bridges still higher and boiling white rapids below, and a great silence settled down once more. On this passage, high in the air, over the precise center of the rapids, they met an astonished way freight, and her thunder blended with the roar from below, and the wind of her passing brought tears to their eyes till they bowed down their heads for relief. So with bowed heads they whirled into the still more astonished station of Ste. Anne, and without so much as glancing aside, Mr. Vaughan Morgan jerked the twenty Brunel out into the carriage drive, and so into the king's highway, along which she lurched at high speed once more, spattering mud anew.

The details of that flight eastward down the island of Montreal, in the golden light after sunset, through lakeside villages and past disregarded and incensed tollgates, are all most ordinary details. There was no such

navigation as on the Vaudreuil-Como road. The only marvelous thing was Miss McNab's conversation; and for her it was marvelous beyond all marvels. It was jerky and telegraphic and without great poise, and sometimes it was bitten in two because of an excess of enthusiasm on the part of the twenty Brunel over some bump. But through the agency of Mr. Vaughan Morgan and the twenty Brunel, in some way I do not understand, the golden light that overcast the melting snow, and the great spring floods, from road runnels to boiling rivers, had reached in to her soul, and she talked; and Mr. Vaughan Morgan was electrified. She paid no attention to the people in the tonneau. In any case they could not hear. It was all very ordinary, because it had all been said so many times before,— though anything that was ordinary was most extraordinary coming from Miss McNab,— so none of it is worth repeating. It was all about ideals, and what a man lives for, and what a woman is hunting for all the time. And the girl's color was so gorgeous, and it was all so wonderful that at Lachine Mr. Vaughan Morgan took the lower road for no other reason than to buck that suffering car through those disgraceful streets of lower St. Henri, and to dodge among the Amherst trams and the traffic of Notre Dame. The twenty Brunel lifted them as lightly as a gust of summer wind up into Sherbrooke Street with time to spare, and she left Miss Dacoste and Mr. Glover at their doors, through which they disappeared, running. Their clothes were ruined and, for

the time being, they were not friends with anybody; but the trip had been awfully good for their appetites.

Now here is where the blessed illogical part of the whole business comes in. As was said at first, this is a poor story, for it has no plot. The gentleman simply took the lady for a ride in a motor-car. But in front of her own house Miss McNab said, "You dear, dear boy!" for Mr. Vaughan Morgan had also been talking. "And, however you accomplish it, don't ever let father find out we crossed those bridges. Go down to every newspaper now and stop it however you like, but stop it; and then change and come back and talk to me. I'm not going to Lady Sanderson's to-night."

Forty minutes later, Mr. Vaughan Morgan, pale with hunger, handed the twenty Brunel in at the garage.

"I say, Beckley," he said, "you might wash her down a bit, will you?" In thirty-five minutes more, freshly clothed and newly fed, he was climbing upper Peel Street on foot.

## AN UNOFFICIAL LOVE-STORY

THERE are many kinds of love-stories, but I think this is a new kind. Besides, it is true. Truth is so much stranger than fiction that you do not like to write it, because some people are reasonably sure to doubt its being truth, and then they are equally sure to say that your sort of invention shows that you lack common sense and good taste. But in this story there are certain little things that will convince your inner judgment that it is plain truth, after all, and I shall be freed from blame.

Once not very long ago, in a small city in Canada there rose up a young woman. These are only the gravest essentials, for it is very unwise to localize true stories too fully. But it had to be a small city, it had to be in Canada, and "rose up" is strictly the most proper way of expressing it, as will be duly made evident.

The young woman's name was Miss Marjorie Dyer, and her father lived a good deal of his life in a rather small shop on one of the back streets of the city, where he sold coal and smoked. He worried very little, and he kept out of this story wonderfully.

Now, to make all things clear, it will be necessary to explain a little. This particular city had quietly gone

to seed, just as some men do, and nobody knew it, though a certain few had strong suspicions. And, like all other cities that have gone to seed, this city was filled with old families. Perhaps they are the mainspring of the silence. In any case, they not only did not recognize Miss Dyer, but they did not recognize Miss Dyer's existence — at first. The essential difference between their standing in the social fabric and Miss Dyer's was that their fathers had retired from business or were dead, and Miss Dyer's father was still in business and was alive. If it happened to be their grandfathers, so much the greater gulf. For instance, the particular family that had once had a grandfather who did a most profitable grocery business in the same shop from which Miss Dyer's father now sold coal could not see Miss Dyer at all. This is a subvariant of what the doctors call acquired immunity.

Then, further, in a number of the old families the stock had somewhat run out, and some of the young ladies in even the third generation had uncertain teeth and a good deal of some one else's hair, and things called forms sewed into obscure places for safety's sake.

Miss Dyer was built on a different principle altogether. She was rather short and she did not mind a bit. She was capable of filling all her clothes adequately everywhere. In fact, about the alluring contours of her suits there was a strength of line that carried strong conviction and led you to suspect that the suits were not responsible in the least, but that their function was rather to restrain than to exaggerate de-

tails. She had the nice, even, brilliant coloring that goes with supreme health, and in all the essentials, hair and teeth and eyes, she was technically perfect, so that when she was present, you always forgot to notice whether she was beautiful, and when she was absent, you always planned to look the next time, and then always forgot when the next time came. I think this was because she had what is called a magnetic personality. So I doubt whether any one knows to-day whether she was beautiful or not. I doubt also whether it makes any difference. She said that her hair was not black, so we shall have to call it dark brown, and her eyes were a quite even dark blue,— that wonderful country, the north of Ireland, being responsible again,— and like the late Count Von Moltke, were silent in at least seven languages, which is more than could be said of Miss Dyer. But they had one trick. Within one flick of their lids they could take on an expression of the most convincing, child-like innocence, which so wanted to understand, and was sure it could, if you would only explain a little further. It would have been unmanly to question. There was no arguing round it, because the more you argued, the more bewildered the eyes became. It was one of the young woman's finest assets, and with it in full working order she arrived at the age of nineteen years.

Having arrived, she seems to have looked about her and become instantly inspired. This may appear precocious, considering that it was a Canadian climate, but the fact remains. And the inspiration could not have

come from her surroundings, because these, as has been explained, could breed no inspiration; and it did not come from reading, because it was too original and all-embracing, and because she did little reading of an inspiring kind: so it must have come largely from within — pure genius.

Now, when genius elects to bloom in a city that has otherwise gone to seed and undertakes to expend itself within that city, there is bound to be an instant disturbance, an accretional cataclysm, until sometimes it fairly rocks the stars; for the people in general can afford to devote their time to it, and they do, when in a living, breathing city they might be otherwise troubled.

Miss Dyer had some of the finest characteristics of Madame de Maintenon and Cleopatra, and a number of still finer characteristics of her own, and she looked about her and foresaw the possibilities of even that situation. The first desideratum was the establishment of an entirely continuous performance, such as can be worked up without great difficulty in London. That is, she wished to live every moment of what she planned was to be a long and joyful life. She did not ask for London; she did not ask to go on the stage; she disapproved of the stage as a profession. This was to be part of her ultimate attitude, and she had adopted it thus early. Consider the magnitude of this strategy. She wanted and asked for nothing but full liberty and health to do the best she could, in all innocency, with what the gods had provided. And I think this was notable, for if you take your dweller in a wayside city,

who has been brought up to draw a line between labor and rest, and explain to him ever so fully how the smallish coterie who truly live the life of the world have not one single altogether-slack waking moment in it, and how even in their stillest thoughts they are working toward one great end,— not always minutely particularized,— he may believe, but he certainly will not understand. At a dinner of the Liverpool Ship-brokers' Benevolent Association once Ian Maclaren said that "If Sir Alfred Jones could be tempted aside from his task of absorbing the rest of the world's merchant marine —" This is the precise attitude. It is best expressed with the ancient word "Excelsior," and Miss Dyer had it, only she would not be content with the world's merchant marine, any more than would Sir Alfred Jones. Or Napoleon Bonaparte.

If you started in to make it clear to yourself just how Miss Dyer's earlier activities were calculated to affect her progress, you might have some little trouble in tracing the connection unless you considered two more things. The first of these is the heart and soul of true genius, the amazing regard paid to essential detail and the still more amazing disregard of non-essential detail. The second is one of the most curious and obscure rules that geniuses use. It seems to be beyond all reason. I think it would be very difficult to state it correctly, but it is something like this: "If you concentrate your full energies on the things that are at hand, you will, through the mercy of Heaven, be able to attain to your heart's desire among the things that are not at hand."

This is all bound up with the theory of equivalent sacrifice and such things; but if you think it over carefully, you will see that there is a deep truth somewhere. Also, if you come back from the finish of this story and read this text over again you will see how it applied. I do not pretend to believe for a moment that Miss Dyer knew this law existed, but when you combine genius with a woman's compound intuition, the combination is authorized to use laws without inquiring whether they exist or not. This she doubtless did; and see where she ended.

So, when at the age of nineteen years she became inspired and stepped softly into the arena, she noted that one of the essential details was dress, and she dressed. I imagine she exhausted the subject, as a genius does any subject he finds it necessary to touch. She dressed on the nether verge of the fashion. To have been quite within the fashion would have been too severe a shock for even Miss Dyer to administer to that city, and she knew it. But she was strictly within the period, and to be within the period in surroundings that might almost yet turn out a basque or a polonaise is to breed thunder and lightning.

The period of Miss Dyer's arrival at nineteen corresponded with the period of the arrival of long gloves, and it is her long gloves I remember above all other weapons she used, and I was but an onlooker on the far outside. She had a forearm that should have sent a susceptible man clean out of his mind, and the gloves were a dream. When she had them on, you wished her

to take them off, and when she took them off, you wished her to put them on, for the sake of seeing her take them off again. They were in certain subdued shades, and they had a nerve-wearing way of slipping down, and continuing to slip down, till they slid over a shell-pink and dimpled elbow that had two movable shadows, where they had to be rescued; and she was constantly having to get her hands out of them through an inadequate aperture at the wrist, all of which seemed to call for outside assistance, which was not permitted. As to the rest of the dress, it was as subdued as the gloves, and its taste was beyond all question; but the money Mr. Dyer must have laid out on patent-leather shoes and open-work silk stockings and those gloves and such like would have stocked several farms. However, the coal business, properly conducted, is a profitable business, and I think Mr. Dyer believed in his daughter.

But you must not be deceived by the apparent thoroughness of this dress effect. It has been attempted before.

Miss Dyer saw also that another essential detail was a fluent command of the English language. This was more wonderful. The dress instinct might be normal enough, but this involved genius again. Safely past the last new adverb in the exhausted hysteria of the North American press, picking scraps from things as far apart as "Kim" and "Lorna Doone," she simplified her English down to the simplicity of the English of Dean Swift, of whom she had never heard, and used it largely for suggesting what she did not mean and con-

cealing what she did. In the first of these two attainments she had the wisdom of the serpent. The high gods had given her a subversive drawl that would have lured the same gods out of heaven. She could spell the word T-H-E, and the tyro would be confident that he had been let into a family secret, and when he proceeded to presume upon it through the medium of fervent words, he would pause to find those troubled eyes searching his and an unruffled voice explaining that it did not understand. The expert, if necessary, collided with briefer and more pointed phrases, which could not possibly be mistaken. That is, the foundation of Miss Dyer's formidable and simplified method was neither more nor less than the great secret method that has moved triumphant down the centuries: thoughtless and most casual remarks, slipped at certain calculated intervals, as inconspicuous as drops of attar of roses, each containing two pregnant meanings that would involve vast knowledge and one other meaning that would involve nothing whatever, coupled with a barrier that could not conceivably be broken at all. There is no danger in giving away the secret, because there are so few who can keep the barrier quite intact. It is not intended that they should. But once in a while there is a woman born, and she goes ever so far.

So, having inspected her earthworks, Miss Dyer let things take their course without so much as raising one pink finger to aid or restrain; and in that moment her own particular public fixed its wandering regard on the light of her presence.

The first apparent candidate was a lawyer, the second was a member of the Provincial Parliament, and both were from outside cities. She absorbed them without a sign. What on earth she did with them I am sure I do not know, but they came back and continued to come back. I think each had his time rigidly prescribed, and followed it on pain of excommunication. She never appeared in public with either of them, except at chance moments, as she might have appeared with any one else she met on the street. But there were times when each of them appeared on the street alone, walking hurriedly and with a puzzled expression, as if something might have gone wrong or missed connection or been misunderstood. At such times Miss Dyer was invisible to the naked eye, as was also the other man, though which man it was appeared to make no difference; and, when next seen, the other man, who had been invisible, would be whistling like a bullfinch, and Miss Dyer would be the same as before, and as ever. If the two men happened to meet, they were very friendly and seemed to regard each other with a sort of pity.

Now these obscure symptoms troubled certain of the ladies of that city, and they rose up and took Miss Dyer's name in vain, as she had not only foreseen, but planned that they should, and it was utterly in vain, because there was really nothing to say, except that she dressed better than they, and this was not worth saying. But the things they said about why she dressed, and how she dressed — the raw, vulgar, unproved, usual things, were very bitter indeed. Most of them

Miss Dyer heard immediately, because her intelligence system was as efficient as a transformer, and they did not even affect her as a tonic, for she showed no signs of needing a tonic, but went her way and was as sweet as clover in bloom.

Then, as synchronously as triplets, came three brand-new additions to this happy family. They were a doctor of medicine, very young for a doctor; a violinist, who was younger than he looked; and a literary man, this last middle-aged and obscurely but certainly married. He admitted it himself. Miss Dyer absorbed the lot. When openly questioned about the literary man who was married she said he was "the very least friend in the world, and she thought he was awfully nice; and besides, what could she do?" This finishing question is unanswerable, as has been fully proved through some thousands of years; so the literary man stayed.

The orders of the day — and night — had nicely been given out, and matters had more or less settled into their proper routine again, when, without warning, appeared two more, both lawyers and both young and insistent. These were apparently admitted without discussion, but shortly afterward things showed signs of becoming somewhat heated, and the air was full of scintillations. It became rapidly noticeable, until it was evident that the only thing that was not heated was Miss Dyer. She appeared with a poised and unforced smile, as a life-trained juggler, who with only two bare human hands persuades many knives and balls and flaming torches

to move at one time, in the same firmament, without interfering with one another at all. And gradually the trouble subsided.

At this stage of the performance any of the spectators who had a sense of humor rocked in their seats, but the others failed to see anything especially funny in it, and stood up in their rigor and said that it was shocking. All this was in midwinter, and opera-house and rink and moving-picture shows, with the other classical entertainments of a small Canadian city, presented thin cross-sections of Miss Dyer's existence, and almost always with a totally different man. Between these high lights there were vast spaces of shadow wherein she would entirely disappear, and leave the dazzled onlookers in wonder, without one inkling of a suspicion as to what might be happening.

Very shortly after this I think she must have found the work too wearing, for she began to discard from her weak suits. She dropped the doctor, who belonged to that city, and he retired with some grace and became the abbot of a new order that was to be styled her "bosom friends." The member of the Provincial Parliament vanished utterly,— you could pass your hand through the space where he had been,— and was replaced by a member of the Dominion Parliament. She retained the violinist and the literary man who was married, on account of their enthusiasm, and a little afterward came an engineer and replaced one of the younger lawyers, who stepped in among the bosom friends.

The lot of these latter, if they had only known it, was the more enviable of the two; but they did not know it, and further, they did not want it explained to them. It would have been worth your life to try it. They formed a sort of Band of Hope, and kept cheerful in public, and bided their time, trusting, I suppose, that all the rest might die.

But nobody died. Instead, matters went on with gradually increasing intensity through two years, and Miss Dyer passed from the age of nineteen to twenty-one and became expert to the point of public suffocation. How she did it all was a clean mystery. The men continued to be very friendly in public and patently pitied one another. In the ordinary course of affairs, when a new man came to town, with due introductions to the first families, his track through their afternoon teas and on to Miss Dyer was like the track of a falling star. She would favor him with a public annexation without so much as a quiver of her lips, and after that his position depended purely upon his own capability. At first, if he fell, his name was Anathema, and the first families would not take him back; but later they took him back freely, and were thankful. They had to, because, with a rare and fossilized exception, the only men available were made up of the chaff that had gone through Miss Dyer's winnower, and, being light in weight, had come forth, freed from all dignity, on the wings of the wind.

Throughout this whole time Miss Dyer's inner, private life, which I have later reason to know was still

entirely her own, must have been a rich and feverish study. With my own respectful eyes I have seen the boy leave the telegraph office with four messages to her address, and have seen the prompt answers come back, written in a neat and decided hand. The cables also were her servants, and I even came across the results of two pregnant messages that must have gone wireless, for they stopped a twelve-thousand-ton steamer long enough for a man within to be debarked into a tow-boat without. She went to every notable dance within reasonable railway connection — the invitations were the least part of it, and she could manufacture a chaperon out of less material than any one I ever saw,— and she slept and dressed in a sleeper as in her own bedroom. Roses and violets were her companions, and through the whole glittering program she passed in full poise and with such evident self-respect that common sense was dumb. But there is too little common sense in this world.

So, in the autumn of her twenty-first year she bathed and walked and thought and lived, and swung many things to her determined ends, as do the people of another world that has no more in common with the life of a Canadian town than if it were on the inner edge of the outer ring of Saturn. And she had accomplished this all out of her own soul. And nobody had the smallest idea where it might all end, and, least of all, Miss Dyer. Wherein again she resembled Sir Alfred Jones and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Then, when the first snow lay in the upper hills and

the fine ice was making in the smallest lakes, came one more man to live in that city; and he was a stranger and a diplomat. He was a diplomat by instinct and training and profession, and even by birth, if diplomats are born, for his grandfather, who was an earl, had been a diplomat before him. But, unless something like the great earthquake at Messina occurred when he was not present, there was no more chance for his being an earl than there is for you or me. He was what is called, I believe, an agent of the Foreign Office, and it was considered expedient that he should be stationed in that city for that winter. Why an agent of the Foreign Office should be stationed in a Canadian town might seem to need some explanation, but remember again that this is truth, and truth always needs so many explanations that it is better not to attempt them. His name was Trevor,— Arthur Morley Mott-Trevor in full, — and his face was as fresh as a baby's, or an Englishman's, can be. He had been brought up to live in the way Miss Dyer had had to invent for herself. His age could not have been over thirty, which is very young to be cast loose by the Foreign Office, and with his little shadow of a mustache he looked twenty-five. In actual, secret fact the Foreign Office did not consider him brilliant, but steady, extremely steady. In sweet innocence of expression his countenance was like the countenance of an unshorn lamb. Taken all in all, he was a most deceptive appearance. He brought one or two excellent letters and seemed anxious to please, so he was swept into the first families without reserve. Of course

they knew nothing about the earl, or the Foreign Office, or anything of the sort, but they said they thought his people must have been very nice people, and judged that, as he did not seem to have much force, he was some sort of a remittance-man. So they decided that they would be nice to him, and perhaps, when he grew up, he would have some money and marry one of them.

Now, a man might reside for a long time in that city without so much as seeing Miss Dyer's face, but assuredly no man with his freedom and hearing might be present forty-eight hours without having heard Miss Dyer's name.

Within the first day Mr. Trevor heard it twice rather obscurely, as a traveler from a far land might hear the name of a sacred elephant or an enchanted princess; and in the second day he heard it several times in a way that should have been gratifying to Miss Dyer. Even his Foreign-Office-discouraged curiosity was affected for the time. Then he forgot all about it until two days later, when he was seated in the round-bayed end of a long drawing-room with many young ladies and a few young gentlemen, drinking tea. Here something called it up, and, chatting facetiously with two young ladies, and with his mind freed from all evil, he chirped in a half-lull:

"By the way, who is Miss Marjorie Dyer?"

He did not say this very loudly, but all other sounds died down and the tea seemed to freeze in the cups. In two seconds his life-training stepped in, and he was gravely chasing a piece of frosted fruit-cake across a

Wilton carpet, and in twenty seconds, by a circuitous method, he had convinced them that he laid so little stress on the question that he had forgotten about it. But this made no difference. The young gentlemen were as silent as lost tombs, and the young ladies wished to explain, and they did, through forty minutes; and when they had finished, Mr. Trevor said to himself: "Either these people are most ingenious and consistent liars, which I doubt, or here at last is one of the wonders of the world. How she can do it in so small a town I cannot quite see; but this is a great world full of mystery — and she does not seem to be what you could call popular. Anyway, I should like to see her very much." But he did not for two weeks.

His official duties occupied about ten minutes in each day, and in the rest of the time he fraternized largely with two Marconi men, so as to be a normal Englishman, and walked in the hills as only an Englishman will. At the end of the two weeks, at a band night at the rink, Miss Dyer, in a maroon cloth suit and mink toque and stole, backward, and on the left outside edge, skated into his arms and had to be picked up. She was so sorry. He solemnly asked for an introduction and solemnly got it, but there seemed to be a substratum of levity in the atmosphere. The next band was theirs beyond question. Miss Dyer's eyes were sparkling.

"Would it hurt your sense of fitness to drop that distinguished expression this early?" she inquired in the middle of the first round. Mr. Arthur Morley Mott-Trevor laughed outright.

"In what?"

"Life," she flashed. "I skated into you on purpose."

"I know," he said.

"That is why I told you. I heard of you, and I thought it just as well to be direct." Following which she meditated aloud: "An Englishman in Canada, with no Cockney accent and no provincialisms, and not just being on the verge of making a plan to do something very special. So he came here as a winter resort, with the London labels outside all the other labels on his baggage, and he had been staying at Claridge's, as the prospective exile always does. Is n't 'prospective exile' good for me? No, don't be frightened; I did n't ask anybody. I never ask anybody anything I don't know. I saw it all with my own innocent eyes, by the merest accident. It 's my abused star that looks after those things. I was standing quite close to you at the station when you came, and heard you say 'Railleh!' — you do it much better than I do,— so I went at once and looked at your baggage — the only baggage that looked like you, all leather and brass and labels. I always do things so directly that nobody ever suspects me. I 'll whisper: *I* think you 're a sort of mystery." Mr. Trevor's face showed no sign of being frightened, and his smile glowed with interest and a desire to follow; but his inmost soul was troubled, for this was an uncanny performance, most especially for one who should not have known the difference between Claridge's and the Star and Garter. However, he scored his first

point, for Miss Dyer minutely studied that bland countenance, and, finding nothing to interpret, gave him full credit for being clever to the point of great excitement, and deftly changed the subject. That was Miss Dyer's mistake; but steadiness sometimes passes for cleverness and nobody ever knows.

Could he waltz?

He had not lavished ten guineas a season on Prince's for nothing, and he could, extravagantly so. And they waltzed, and Mr. Trevor remembers that waltz to this day. It was the beginning of the trouble. It was calculated to be.

Waltzing on a floor is a tentative business beside waltzing on skates. A man may throw his strength into it, and the more strength, the more superb the swing. You are heaved precariously backward along an unseen curve in the universe that is created for your support, and when this comes to its extreme and delicately balanced end, you are drawn into another curve forward that brings you back mysteriously to the place whence you were launched. The theory is wonderful and improbable, and that it should work out in practice is much more wonderful and improbable than the theory. But it does, and you are convinced that you did it. Hence the enthusiasm. And besides, there is a helpless girl traveling that same critical pathway for you to guide and protect,— this is also part of the theory,— so you may even become inspired, and add the energy that inspiration gives, until the energy and the inspiration and the reaction and the music become thor-

oughly blended, and you hold the entire world loosely within your grasp, assured that it is yours. The attainment of this height depends on whether you are an expert and whether it is a proper girl.

In this case Mr. Trevor found that this girl had the poise of a planet and that her muscles were as nearly living steel as he conceived that a woman's might be. She was a little more self-reliant and unwavering and stronger on her skates than he, and there was a clean precision about her changes of edge that was impressive to the point of exhilaration. So he waltzed clear out of his trained restraint and into an ineffable odor: he was outrageously crushing a large bunch of violets. Her breath on his right cheek sunk half the silly world, and the next breath, being taken deeply, sunk the rest. One little wisp of hair persistently blew back until its silky trail across his lips made the wheeling lights overhead tremble in their orbits. So the music slowed and stopped, and that waltz was finished.

"Oh!" breathed Miss Dyer, letting herself down in one deep sigh, "I wonder why so many people are born into this world!" The accent wavered along somewhere between "wonder" and "why" and "this," and the inference was highly adjustable. The diplomat came painfully back and was silently and appropriately puzzled through a suspiring half minute. But Miss Dyer was speaking in an unimpeachable voice.

"Have you ever heard of the cynosure of three hundred eyes?"

"I have," he said, "something of that sort. Why, particularly?"

"You 're it," she informed. "You 've waltzed yourself into peerless repute. If you never knew your own importance, turn round,"— She stopped him with a falling hand,—"when you think it would be properly advisable, and gaze at the giggling gargoyles that decorate the upper millstone in this —— mill. I can't stay very long in the air without overheating my engine and stopping; but you know what I mean. Their eyes are turned this way, and their leaping hearts are still. Socially you are dead, and your memory is dying — or it will be unless from this moment you are very good. They may overlook this once, owing to your youth, and call it an error in judgment. I think they will this time, because they will get a singular fit of charity,— I won't tell you why,— and say you may not have been altogether to blame. Now, having been properly warned, go away and prepare to live happily ever after." Miss Dyer was smiling an alluring and all-concealing smile. "And — thank you for the waltz. It was one of the very best I ever had; perhaps the best — in — my — life. Good-by. This is Kismet, and common sense."

Mr. Trevor regarded her with great gravity as he spoke.

"I 'm moderately stupid, but don't be crude — I mean crude enough to make me — have to pretend — to think for one second that you believe — that I

could be tempted to depart — into outer darkness for any reasonable reason whatever — not alone for the sacred sake of my glittering status in this metropolis."

"Please," she said —"please, you forgive me this once, and I never will again. I only wanted to do my duty and properly warn —"

"Which, now, having done, your spirit is at rest. I am warned, and my life is in my own hands. Now be practical. Do you think I shall be permitted to have the chance of risking it — or whatever it is y' do risk?" Miss Dyer stood solemnly erect, and made a grave and ponderous quotation:

"What power may stop the man who has set his mind upon a worthy end! I am a profound believer in the efficacy of individual prayer — and effort. What that means in English is, You never can tell till you try."

"Madam," said Mr. Trevor, "that is not good enough. If that is your best, I shall have to try to hold myself in check." There was a sad sub-tone here that was convincing to deep intuition. "I try never to go into real competition in anything. I have made it my life's labor to be so efficient in action that there will be no call for substitutes; *but* imitation competition of any sort in the world I don't mind a bit, so long as I really know —" Here there was a considerable pause — "Now," he said slowly, "please be frank. Please trust one human being for one time on earth, and I solemnly promise I 'll try to deserve the trust. What is abso-

lutely the best you have to offer?" Miss Dyer gasped.

"Well — of all the brazen impertinence that was ever — oh, I think that it is the most sublime nerve — and inside of twenty minutes! Now, if I had a small enough mind, my proper answer would be the majestic and traditional thing, and I 'd stand up regally and tell you to go and hold yourself in check, then. But I have n't, thank God! I think I know impudence fresh from heaven when I see it. It 's your courage that saves you —"

"It 's our courage that always does," Mr. Trevor interrupted with the voice of a sermon. "But tell me, now, and I promise I 'll try to deserve it."

"Don't you worry about deserving it. People with as much courage as that deserve ever so many things. It 's the rarest gift, I think. Here 's your concession — you don't know what a big one it is. The best I have to offer is curiosity."

"How much?" This is the mechanical singsong of the huckster.

"Oceans of it; more than I should like to tell you." Her gloved hands spread suggestively apart.

"More than — let 's say ever before within the same time? Remember, I promise to try and deserve even this." She studied a maroon-strapped watch with one eyebrow finely arched, and pondered.

"Twenty-two minutes. Yes, but in earnest — very much more than ever within the same time. There, I won't say one more word, because I might be making myself ridiculous."

"That is quite good enough. I wonder if it happens to be true." This last was intoned to the roof.

"Do you never tell anything but the truth?"

"Never," he said. "It might be worth noting that as you pass. You see, it is n't necessary."

"Nothing but the truth," she commented, "and very little of that. What a tremendous lot you must leave untold!"

"Quite so. It 's much the better way, is n't it! But, to be practical once more, when am I to see you again?"

"'The actual change from the quiet preparation of convent life to the intricate problems of the practical world always comes to the young girl with more or less shock,'" quoted Miss Dyer. Mr. Trevor stared.

"What on earth have you been reading?" he said.

"Oh, I don't know. All I ever remember are nice apposite quotations. Is n't 'apposite' a bully word! Oh, what was the question?" with a puckered forehead and a rising inflection. "Oh, yes: when were you to see me again?" This seemed to call once more for deep thought. Then she laughed. "You 're quite sure you want to?" Mr. Trevor was offendedly silent. "Well, then, you 're quite sure you 're willing to take the responsibility without consulting your godfather and godmother?" Mr. Trevor took the responsibility freely. "All right," she said; "you 've done it all yourself. Can you drive a horse?" Mr. Trevor swallowed this insult with a boyish grin and a nod. "Then, see!" She swept the nearest mem-

bers of the nearest groups with casual, radiant eyes, and the subversive drawl was at its best: "You realize, because the surroundings are so little and so complicated, that the principle of official secrecy must be strictly maintained,"— Here Mr. Trevor nearly jumped, for "the principle of official secrecy" was the pet phrase of his chief; but Miss Dyer was proceeding, — "so, I think the best thing for you to do would be to take a horse and a sleigh and go to the north side of Pember Square — that is the dark side — to-morrow evening at eight o'clock to the second."

"Snow, sleet, hail, or —"

"Fire," she finished. "And bring quantities of rugs — extra rugs. I 'm sure we 'll find use for them all." Mr. Trevor paused long enough to be sure that his voice was freed from all emotion.

"And what sort of horse does Your Excellency prefer?"

Miss Dyer turned her unwavering eyes on his, and pure glory shown round about.

"I always think there are different sorts of horses for different times of day," she began.

"And for night?"

"For night — you see, it is dark, and I think a horse that is to travel in the dark should be an intelligent horse, don't you? The sort of horse that could find his way home from miles and miles away, if he had to, through any accident. From the north side of Pember Square this town is disgracefully lighted all the way out into the blessed country." She fled, and he saw her

disappear through an outer door, where two men stood darkly on guard, like the Angels of the Gate, and closed in, shoulder to shoulder, behind her as she went.

This was the full initiation and introduction of Mr. Arthur Morley Mott-Trevor. In the light of his life-training it may seem a bit hurried, but for it to seem quite within reason you would have to see and talk to Miss Dyer. He skated and waltzed most normally through the rest of that evening, making a thoughtful point of being unaware that he was regarded in a new and important light by the élite, until he quite convinced them that nothing had happened, and he was restored to favor softly, so that he might not notice he had been out, though they seemed a little worried. At the same time, in his slack moments, he was saying to himself "twenty-one," "the principle of official secrecy," and some other things. He went to his room, which was in a hotel called the Trent, and he duly prepared to go to bed.

"This," he said, "is the blazing exception that proves the truth of all natural laws — one of the wonders of the world, without doubt." He searched his London methodically, but could think of no such example of armored sophistication. "But that," he said, "is not the point. It is the other thing — the largely unattainable. The best test of it is this: I can think of no situation I ever knew where I would n't trust her to look after herself — and me, if she owned me — and be a woman. Such a pyramidal balance I never saw; which goes to show that underneath all this other

stuff her heart is clean." (When you come to think of it, that test is a good test.) He looked out across the lighted snow. "It 's a burning shame," he said. "I wonder —" But here he stayed. You cannot learn everything at one time. And he was not nearly so cold-blooded as this sounds, which is easily proved. Thus. He went to bed and curiously he went to sleep; but at three o'clock in the morning he woke up, stark awake, and seeing no prospect of going to sleep again, got up and bathed and dressed, not casually, but most carefully, and went to work, writing unimportant letters, because they were the only sort he could write. (That was Miss Dyer in full reaction.) A little after gray dawn, passing a full-length mirror, he looked in, said, "Silly ass!" and went on, and after a very early breakfast he went out into the snow-clad back country and walked eighteen unsuspected miles. Altogether it was a pretty notable disturbance for the time it took.

Then, in mid-afternoon, he went to a livery stable and selected, with minute care, a sleigh and one horse, roan, with a peaceful eye and a lovely testimonial, and even a harness, and also four luxurious robes, which he ordered to be installed in a prescribed way. He searched the liveryman's eye, but that person was advanced in years and knew his business. And within one minute of eight o'clock in the evening Mr. Arthur Morley Mott-Trevor, blending the steam of his breath with the steam of the roan's, sprayed open one unbroken drift in the mouth of a side street and wheeled, largely on one runner, into the north side of Pember Square. For

he was human and he was young, and his imagination was keen, and his heart was big within him, and the bells sang songs.

And Miss Dyer was not there; nor did she come there. The spaces under the stars where she might have been lay as empty as the Barren Grounds. In the following twenty minutes several people passed that way, but none of them resembled Miss Dyer in the least, and at the end of half an hour Mr. Trevor went away, and drove by himself for the sake of driving. But beyond a street light he met one sleigh carrying two people and moving at high speed. As they passed, the lady held a muff to her face, as though she was shielding it from the cold, so that he could only see her eyes, and he imagined — but that was doubtless imagination.

So, being human and being young, Mr. Trevor was very much disappointed, but his training came to his rescue sooner than most men's would, because it was a habit, and his heart was not hardened, and he laughed to himself, and at himself, and waited. Herein resideth a mighty power. If you are able to laugh with yourself and at yourself at certain times, you have a better piece of armor than any cuirass ever forged; but if you are able to wait without bitterness, you can dissolve away the diamond teeth of oppressive gods. Mr. Trevor knew that a woman always has a reason for doing everything, though no one would suspect it, and he was sure that if he waited long enough he would find out. He always trusted that he might have mental capacity enough to master the complications when he did. He

had a simple theory that in this and in certain other respects women and governments were exactly alike, and unlike anything else on earth. It worked something like this: If you wanted anything very special from either of them, and were impolitely rebuked, and stood on your dignity, you might continue to stand on your dignity, as they hoped you would, until you had nothing else to stand on; but if you trampled on your dignity, and accepted the rebuke with cheerfulness, and were generally irritating, and said, "Quite so; but —" and reverted to the original subject once more, and so forth, forever, that in the end you might attain to the place where you desired to be, and the dignity you gained would be greater than the dignity you lost — only you must never show it, for the sake of peace. So, applying this theory, and without attempting to understand anything, thereby showing essential wisdom, Mr. Trevor went to his rooms that night and said, "Now we begin." Perhaps this is what Miss Dyer intended him to say. But this time, curiously again, he went to sleep at once, and he did not wake up until the proper time next morning; which would seem to show that he had some sort of a feeling of security in his heart.

Then, with the morning mail, came a letter, dated the day before and of course postmarked to match. Its form and formalism were beyond reproach on earth; it was brief and straight-worded, as sincere and as kindly as the Southwest wind. It was a clever letter. She was so sorry that something had come up that would

prevent her going. She was keenly disappointed, as she had so much enjoyed their talk of the night before. If, however, he were able to come to-morrow night instead, she would try not to fail. That is, it was clever in its artless inanity and mature restraint, and in the fact that, while it told nothing but the truth, it neglected entirely to tell the truth about the thing for which it was supposed to be written. But Mr. Trevor put it away in a pocket, and that evening, with the same horse and the same sleigh, and within one minute of eight o'clock, turned into the north side of Pember Square. And Miss Dyer was not there: nor did she come this time. So he went driving by himself again, and after feeling properly downcast for a few minutes, laughed uproariously in the midst of a belt of spruce, and hoped that nobody would hear. Mr. Trevor had been brought up to consider and love intricate games.

"Here is something worth living for," he said. "Think of those childlike eyes planning this out for me!" On the way home he said, "I wonder where she is to-night," and he felt a wave of some sort sweep across his heart. It might be loneliness. Perhaps Miss Dyer intended it.

In the morning came another letter, dated and postmarked as before, and so sincere that he knew she had the priceless gift of meaning what she wrote while she was writing it. If he would come once more, she would try not to fail this time. Now strategy is confounded by faith.

So that evening also, with faith unabated, with horse

and sleigh and robes all proper, and within one minute of eight o'clock, Mr. Trevor turned into the north side of Pember Square. And Miss Dyer was there.

She was there in an over-long, self-frieze coat and blue-striped tuque that was not intended to be pretty and almost made a disguise, and she slipped in, dug a thoughtful hole in the robes, and buried herself.

"Now drive!" she ordered, fur to the eyes. "Seymour Street and the Upper Road, and drive hard!"

"Why?" he inquired.

"Because I say so." They cowered under a storm of hoof-flung snowballs, and this was her last word till they were beyond the outer lights. Then she sat up and annexed the reins.

"I 'll drive now," she said. There followed a momentous pause that slowed the roan to a walk and opened a glade hung in pure crystal.

"Do you know what live there in summer?" she asked suddenly, leaning forward to search the shadows.

"No," said Mr. Trevor. "What?"

She counted them as a child.

"Raspberries, and snakes, and morning-glories." She stared in wide-eyed amazement when he laughed and said, "Magnificent!" It was a most beautiful combination, but her tone was so nicely recollective that it left the honored listener in wonder as to just when and how she might have found out, as was certainly intended. Here followed a momentous and misinterpreted pause. Then, "You 're a funny man," she said.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because you came."

"Came! Oh, I should have continued to come for ever and ever so long; every night for as long as I had orders —"

"*You* would!"

"Of course. You produced your terms the other night. I signed 'em. You were in earnest, were n't you?"

Miss Dyer studied the shadow of the boy's face.

"Surely," she said, with a check in her voice; "but — I was very sorry I could n't come before —"

"'Sh! stop it!" he raised a hand. "That 's unworthy, as were the letters. I don't mean you mailed them too late. That would n't have been refined enough for you; but mailing them just so late that you could work on the seventy-five per cent chance of my not getting them till the morning. That is unimpeachable — but unworthy."

Miss Dyer openly giggled.

"You 're lovely," she said. "I was just going to lie —"

"Don't!" interrupted Mr. Trevor; "and some day, if I 'm fortunate enough to deserve it, you tell me truly why you did n't come."

Suddenly the lady seemed troubled in her mind.

"May be," she said at the end. "Now tell me what you live for."

Mr. Trevor considered the three thousand visible stars.

"Any — other — little — thing?" he inquired.

"No; that will do. Proceed."

"Let me see. Should n't like to seem immodest, but I think I live to do what seems to be my own work as well as I can, with the ever-present hope of falling in love with some nice girl some day and marrying her."

"That 's simple and original," she said,—"the nice creed that is so much older than Christianity. I think I see where the immodesty would come in — telling out loud what you think is your own work. Never mind, I like ambitious people; I mean I don't like any other kind. If you have n't ambition, you have n't much of anything in this world, have you? Now, would n't you like to hear what I live for?"

Mr. Trevor would. Also, he could catch the glint of her eyes, and her voice was like carded silk.

"You 'll never believe," she said, "but here it is: to fall in love with some man who needs my help in his life-work, and to make myself so perfect that he 'll fall in love with me — for ever and ever. Amen."

"My!" he breathed, "but you are a nice girl, if that 's true! But — it seems less complicated than I thought. The other point of view —"

"Is my method, and this is myself. Careful, or I 'll never tell you the truth again as long as I live."

"You forgive this time. You see you 're deceptive at first sight."

"And perhaps at third," she murmured. "This is

only second. You never can tell." Herein she spake prophecy.

"But what I was most specially going to ask about was that for ever and ever business — the exclusiveness of it."

Miss Dyer afforded time to measure Mr. Mott-Trevor with her eyes and full judgment, and gave him the benefit of the doubt.

"Don't be silly!" she said, speaking slowly. "That 's unworthy, too: but maybe I 've brought it on myself, so I 'll answer.

"You and I have studied the laws?" She marked the end of the sentence with an upraised hand that would have brought back ambition to the eldest sultan.

"We have," said Mr. Trevor.

"And we 've seen the poor devils that have refused to obey?"

"Yes."

"And we 've seen our nice, pink-cheeked grandmothers going down in happiness under the old régime; so there does n't seem to be any other point of view, does there? I 'm no fool, you know."

"Glory!" said Mr. Trevor. "And you a girl and twenty-one! We love many things, and nothing more steadily than common sense —"

"Thank you," she said. "That is a little the best thing you 've said yet. I 'd rather be me and be sure I had common sense than a goddess and a fool,— that is, if goddesses ever are fools,— and I s'pose some of

them must be, as every other sort of person seems to be able —"

They drove many starlit miles, and talked gravely of many grave matters that have been discussed in part before, until Mr. Mott-Trevor was amazed at the sweep of her vision; for that was Miss Dyer in that mood. Toward the end that mood collapsed, and the devil of irresponsibility, or whatever devil she called upon for these scenes, instructed her to turn into an unbroken wood road, which she said she knew.

"Turn up your collar and pray!" she ordered when they sidled over the edge of a precipice into hemlock and cavernous darkness. From this they fared out into what seemed to be a swamp, through which the surprised roan strode like a moose, with the alders slapping his belly, and from the swamp they emerged at an extreme angle, boring through snow-laden brushwood, with the horse coughing somewhere overhead, until the sleigh lay level full of snow up to their chins. Beyond the barrier they stood up to shake this overboard, but were spared the trouble, for one runner climbed smoothly on something unseen, and they and the rugs and the snow rolled into two feet of snow outside, where Miss Dyer lay half-smothered, and laughed until the roan, with a shaft over his rump, turned his head and stared in extreme wonder. Then she arose and brushed and shook and folded things in such a matter-of-fact, motherly way, and found the main road — thereby showing that she did know that wood road — that Mr. Trevor was more impressed. It is these least things that tell.

They drove home open friends, and Miss Dyer insisted on being put out at a dark and deserted corner, though Mr. Trevor failed to see the necessity; and that night, in his own room, in the coldest blood he could command, weighing at its fullest value each advantage of eminence in the ancient and established order of the families of the Empire, he made up his detached mind for himself, quite as though his family were doing it for him, that, of all the girls he had seen, or was likely to see, on this earth, Miss Dyer was the girl for him. Having instituted this religion, he advanced one more theory, to be added to the women-and-governments theory. It was something to the effect that to be certain you are to be happy you must be sure that the girl loves you very much, which will be exhibited to the discerning eye by certain signs.

Now there are two ways of telling the rest of this story, as a three-hundred page novel, or the bald story as I have started it. There are plenty of words for the novel, and plenty of emotions, and sufficiently mixed; but many of the emotions you can imagine for yourself, and the words we can save for other things.

For three heartbreaking days after this drive Miss Dyer's engagements were as the engagements of a prime minister, and Mr. Trevor's world saw her once as a radiant vision leaving a train. She appeared to be very busy, but she bowed uncertainly, as if she had some difficulty about remembering. Then for two evenings, totally belying this pose, she promised freely, by letter, to drive with him, and freely broke both promises with

two beautiful letters of explanation, both of which, with acquired wisdom, he extracted late from His Majesty's post-office. For a man newly in love this sort of treatment is very trying. The essence of Foreign Office training is that you are to think assiduously without ever registering the result either by word or on paper. Mr. Trevor had no difficulty in following.

Then came one curious evening worth recording. Being human, and being far from home, he was feeling a little solemn, when an angel entered. This was a small boy who left a note and went away whistling "Old Hundred." Mr. Trevor said, "That is apposite." The note said, "Please come to-night with the same horse, and bring a rug for — it. M. D." Mr. Trevor came. She bore a suit-case, as one fresh from a journey, and this was stowed under the seat.

"Why the rug?" he inquired when he was sure he had her.

"Because I said so. Now we shall talk some more as we talked the other night."

"Where have you been?"

"Oh, everywhere: it's of no importance." She brushed it away into the night air. Beneath there were certain signs of strain, but overlying these was the mood that had concerned itself with grave matters on the night of that first drive.

Behind that city stands an amphitheater of intricate, water-worn, granite hills, whose spurs drop away in spruce-flecked buttresses and rounded shoulders, until these fall in four-hundred-foot cliffs that guard small,

linked fjords in the Atlantic Ocean. Into the heart of those hills, talking things that essayed to lay bare the foundations of the world, she led him by complicated turns until they were so far uplifted that he saw the level and gray Atlantic, and undertook to note that the road was polished by the four-inch shoes of sleds that brought pulp-wood to a driving dam, and by nothing else. Thence she dropped into a seaward valley, skirted a towering hill-wall that embraced the soft thunder of a calm and unseen ocean, and turned the roan, steaming, into a suddenly rising pathway that showed overlain snow-shoe tracks and no other mark.

"You 've a genius for wood roads," Mr. Trevor commented.

"I 've a genius for selection," she said solemnly. That path gave on a clearing the size and shape of a London drawing-room, walled on three sides with spruce and opened on the fourth to the South wind and the winter sea. But the little breath under the stars that night was north and west and moved so far overhead that it left them in supreme shelter.

"Get out and blanket your horse; I don't think he 'll run away." Mr. Arthur Morley Mott-Trevor plowed overboard in silent wonder, and in wonder obeyed. Miss Dyer wrapped the rugs closer and sat serene.

"Now dig over there," she commanded. She was pointing at a snow hummock that might have hidden a grave.

"Wha-at?" breathed Mr. Trevor.

"Dig"— she beat her hand on the musk-ox hide — "over there."

Mr. Trevor dug with one foot and one hand, and brought up a nicely split stick of wood.

"More," she said.

So he brought up more, a large armful. They were not such sticks as one finds in a woodland clearing, but such as live in the wood-basket by the parlor grate — dry beech, cut to length, and *split*.

Mr. Trevor lifted up his face to marvel.

"Now," she said, speaking swiftly, "clear away the snow *there* and build a fire. You 're English, so here are two newspapers." She produced them. Thinking the second time, Mr. Trevor came to the decision that to marvel would be unwise, or even to think too accurately, so he held his peace and his peace of mind, doing strictly as he was told, with a twinkling eye, which the starlight was not strong enough to show. The fire burned beautifully, and Miss Dyer watched it with a rug tucked under her chin.

"Now these rugs," she said. She pointed where they were to go, backed by three spruce bushes.

"Now me. I 'm not going to walk through that snow." Foreign Office training involves the swift and impassive seizing of opportunity, and Miss Dyer floated from the sleigh to the rugs as on the wings of the dawn.

"Now," she said, "you 've been a man and have asked no questions. It 's only that I never get a chance to talk to you in peace and comfort where I can see your face —"

"But why not?"

"The principle of official secrecy must be maintained, as I've said before. Never mind why. So I wanted to be cozy and have you all to myself, so I made this picnic. Don't you think it's nice?"

For many minutes Mr. Trevor devoted himself to explaining precisely how nice he thought it was. "But be generous and tell me about that wood. How did you know it was there?"

"Wood," she said —"why, there's wood everywhere here." She stretched an inclusive arm toward the spruce wall that towered two hundred feet. "Don't you think you would find wood if you dug almost anywhere in this part of the country?" The subversive drawl, coupled with the firelight in her eyes, was extremely potent, and here the wood question rested. "But I did bring something — You know that suitcase! You get it. Picnics always have suppers, don't they?" and she laughed. This picnic had a supper beyond doubt, with coffee, and they ate it like children. At the same time Mr. Trevor was a little overcome.

"I've heard of originality," he said, trying to be casual.

"What d' y' call it — initiative is more than originality. Oceans of people think of things, and very few do them. I thought of that long, long ago. It's nothing to think of anything, is it? *This* is nothing to think of, but by doing it we've made a little dark hole in the woods into — this." Snow-clad spruce lies nearer to fairyland than anything else this grave world

"I wanted to be cozy and have you all to myself"

holds, but snow-clad spruce under firelight, drifted diamond dust and uneasy shadows, is fairyland in earnest. And always, under the sympathetic voices of the fire, came up the least possible breath of unmuffled thunder from the Western ocean. Side by side, with hands to the flame, they talked of half the things they knew in common, and told of half the things they knew apart, till the beech burned down to a bed of breath-flushed coals, and Mr. Trevor, looking aside at the eyes that were lost in some outer country beyond the ashes, appreciated the great honor and considered himself blessed above all men. And the eyes continued to dream as they rose up and came into the half-shadows. Then she turned suddenly and said:

"You *are* a man, are n't you!"

"I hope —" said Mr. Trevor, who had been silent for a long time, and stopped, not knowing how to go on.

"Take those things back — and me." This was accomplished, to the last rug.

"Now," she said, standing in the sleigh, "come here! Closer! There! Lock your arms behind you! Will you keep them there? That 's very much in earnest. Be careful now, and don't make the mistake of your life!" Mr. Trevor nodded slowly. She put a bare hand on each of his shoulders, and kissed him on the lips, and his soul went out to the hill that overlooks paradise. But he stood his ground.

"You *are* a man," she said in the stillness. "Get the rug off the horse." Mr. Trevor drew breath.

"I don't know, Miss," he said, "what I may have done in the sight of Heaven to have deserved this, but I tell you that if I live a hundred thousand years I shall never forget a — detail. I understand fully that it is to mean nothing whatever."

"That it is to mean nothing whatever," she repeated, with definitive emphasis. They drove home strictly as they had driven home before, except that, to Mr. Trevor, Sirius persisted in being a blazing sapphire.

This was Miss Dyer's most audacious work until she composed another on the same theme, with variations. On one dark and inspiring night she drove him by a road that climbed five miles beyond the uttermost farm-house, and dropped by three hard-holding and precarious chutes to the edge of a frozen woodland lake and a ghostly bungalow that turned out to be a fishing-club. Here she produced a key most naturally, and let herself in, and they built a mighty fire out of cord-wood in a five-foot fireplace. After a notable supper, they faced this in two leather-clad arm-chairs, and talked till the fire was coals, and the wind rose up and made unholy noises in the chimney, and scuffled the white ashes across the hearth, and roared in the spruces outside. And when Miss Dyer arose she looked at Mr. Trevor and smiled. Mr. Trevor drew a steadying breath and said, "You pink-and-white devil!" aloud; and Miss Dyer laughed. But he knew the advantages of his position, and he stood his ground for the second time. He had also a theory that restraint in a man is a mighty

power, though he had never seen it tried. And he was thinking.

"Have you never been here before with any of the — others?" he inquired.

"You ask too many questions," she said; "but since you 've asked — the others I distrust; you I — mistrust. That is the difference."

This is not recommended as a text-book for chaperons.

They drove home that night through a full blizzard, were many times lost, and arrived very late, but Miss Dyer had to be debarked at an obscure corner, as ever.

Then for two weeks the drives multiplied, and the town, unseeing, failed also to see Miss Dyer and Mr. Trevor at the same time, and began to take unnecessary notice. The truth was very difficult to come at, but in a city that has gone to seed when a certain sort of people cannot come at the obscure truth about anything that is not their business, and therefore interests them very much, they do the other thing: they manufacture lies about it; not little, paltry, humorous lies, but big, heartbreaking, savage lies that are calculated to blight the lives of the subjects, and that vary with the special deformity of the inventor's nature. Mr. Trevor was a newcomer, and his work did not seem to be very visible or normal or wearing, and therefore was not understood, and therefore was a suspicious circumstance; and by the law of probability he had to be seen in a

sleigh with Miss Dyer once or twice, and Miss Dyer largely disappeared, and for this, and for no greater reason, there had to be the devil to pay. And there was. And the tar was extremely short. Everybody, of that sort, disapproved, and undertook to say what they thought. It is the most blighting spectacle human nature furnishes. The old families saw that Mr. Trevor had vanished, and said that they did not think he was a nice Englishman. Miss Dyer's bosom friends — the discards — said that they would like to break Mr. Trevor's neck, and made disrespectful remarks about him when he had passed far enough to be out of hearing. Miss Dyer's special entourage said things that could not be classified, because they were very much heated, and each invented special phrases of his own; and the things the general public, of that sort, said were the ordinary, vulgar things, and would not even bear suggesting. And all the time they did not know one little thing, but they inferred, and the sublimed postulate is that the publication of inferences is not justified in equity.

The only soul that did not hear the things was Mr. Trevor, as sometimes happens. Some of his new acquaintances that said they were his friends were willing to tell other people strictly on the q. t., but none of them was quite man enough to tell Mr. Trevor. Perhaps this is the very littlest phase of the very smallest side of all human nature, for there is no hate or lust or greed involved, just cold curiosity and cursedness.

So Mr. Trevor had to hear first from Miss Dyer, and

he was amazed, because in London it takes a pretty good foundation to start a story properly, and it has to be a pretty good story to keep going by itself after it is started; and these stories were not good, nor did they have any real foundation.

It was on still another drive, two nights before full moon. The whole country lay out silver-white to the farthest, broken horizon. Miss Dyer arrived with a large handful of crumpled papers, and her voice labored with a threatening hilarity.

"Go on," she said. "Let 's get out of this — quick. Thank Heaven there 's light enough to read by. I 've got a set of love-letters for you."

"Love-letters!" Mr. Trevor breathed. "I don't want to read your love-letters."

"Oh, I know; but these are unsigned. You would n't know whom they 're from. I don't even know myself, though I suppose I 'm supposed to guess."

"Don't they sign them?" he inquired politely.

"Oh, my, no! They hardly ever sign love-letters to me." Mr. Trevor was silent. The subject was beyond him.

"You need n't read them," she said. "I 'll read them to you. You see, they 're about you, too, though I don't know whether you were intended to be told. They 're lovely. They 're truly literature. They mostly always are. Oh, don't you worry about the ethical side of the business. They deserve it — oh, they deserve it ever so much, or I would n't do it. Listen now — listen to this. Stop the beastly horse;

I can't see." She beat her hand on the rug in the way that had distracted many men from solemn duties. The horse stopped on the sparkling crest of a bare upland ridge over which not one mouse might crawl unseen, and which was high tactics against being overheard, Mr. Trevor crouched in the rugs, and Miss Marjorie Dyer hoisted herself on the arm of the seat and sat erect and free.

"Listen, now!" she crooned, and she selected one with care from the careless sheaf. And from that aery, overlooking a vast and well-watered country, she heaved out in cold blood to the Great Bear one of the most startling collections of human emotions and passions that was ever flung into a Canadian winter night. It is an awe-inspiring thing to see the human heart laid open when you are not specially interested, and as she read, Mr. Trevor's cheeks flushed in the frost. There were times when they offered up their trembling, naked souls, and she laid them out, side by side, under a snow-reflected moon and an unstable Aurora.

"Don't think it's too awful," she said. "I know them so much better than you do, and I know what they've done, which you never will." But there were places where even she was touched.

As she said, sometimes they were truly literature, freed from all effort and beyond all criticism, common words made commanding by their absorbed detachment and by their clean devotion to the subject in hand. They were mercifully released from all perspective; all sordidness was wiped from their lips. Sometimes

they were alike: sometimes they were a little different; but the marvel was how much alike they could be. One began with the man's least daily tasks and his greatest ambitions, and ended by centering God's universe round Miss Dyer's shoes. One was a pure and perfect love-letter. The man appeared explaining his own joys and miseries, all of which were directly traceable to her. This gave him his subject. Then he proceeded earnestly to wipe out the whole of the rest of the living, breathing world: and it was so, for his faith was perfect. He glorified the ground she trod, the air she breathed, and the clothes she wore; and the high hills and the interminable sea were blessed through all ages because she had regarded them as she passed. Time and place and the truths of many thousand years were abolished in a breath. The blaze that overhung the town on a foggy night was the white light of her pure soul shining through her heart-lifting eyes. The causeless ocean of his life was breaking at last in deep, steady surges on the rock of her sanctity, and it knew no other thrill. She was Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, to him, and she held the keys of hell and of death. And the beauty of it all was that it would have convinced the Sphinx.

"Listen to this!" she said: "'*Some nights I am perfectly happy, for in my dreams I truly own you, and know that I own you for all eternity. Even when I wake in the sunlight and shut my eyes again I can feel your cool, soft lips on mine, and every line of your mouth, and the sweep of your hair across my eye-*

*lids. I have to clasp the empty air made sacred by that picture before it all dissolves away like the glories in a mountain lake under the wind that comes after the dawn. Even then you give me a new happiness, for with the full light I see your dear face wholly as it is, the little up-turn at the corners of your laughing mouth and your beautiful eyes that look so fearlessly into this great world. From being an inspiration, you have become the whole cause of my existence, and I worship you: and any man's worship is worth having, even mine.'"*

"Don't!" said Mr. Trevor. "It's sacrilege."

"It's great humility, anyway," said Miss Dyer; "but wait. He has n't got properly warmed up yet, and that's only one side of him. Wait till you hear the outrageous things he calls you," and she tittered. Mr. Trevor stared.

"Me!" he said.

She read it slowly, with refined emphasis, and with her voice trembling with glee, until he interrupted.

"Wha-at! What was that last again?"

"*'Baby-faced whelp,'*" she purred, and giggled like a school-girl. Mr. Trevor pounded his knee.

"But please hold on," she gasped. "Here's some more." She dripped it out in approved and accented rhetoric. "*'Of all the God-forgotten encumberers of the earth, the vilest is an English gentleman's son who is supplied with enough money from home to enable him to be a damned blackguard here.'*"

"Gracious, but he's warm, is n't he! And me so

innocent! He 's got the remittance-man theory, too. I think it 's shocking."

"He 's p-protecting me," stuttered Miss Dyer. "He 's going to knock your head off; you see if he does n't! But here 's another one. This one is less refined. He says you — ah, lack intelligence, and that you put on the manners of a duke, and that he 'd like to twist your silly neck." Mr. Trevor pondered.

"Previous to decapitation, I presume," he murmured.

"I don't know," she said. "Here 's another." She wept tears in the moonlight. "This is a proper letter of warning." It was from one of the bosom friends. It contained a full and perfect code of morals and half a dozen elaborate untruths that reflected on Mr. Trevor's character, and were not even ingenious. That, however, was not the point.

"But why me?" he said. "Why not any of the others as well as me? What have I done to stir up this raving hornets' nest?"

"I 'm sure I don't know," said Miss Dyer in all innocence, and they looked out over the most silent town where these activities dwelt, and laughed.

"Now *is n't* this a wonderful world!" she finished.

Mr. Trevor said that, in his opinion, it was.

Here followed eight weeks of winter and spring that were beyond his calculation. He inferred that they contained all that was incomprehensible about woman. Miss Dyer was as evanescent as the zodiacal light, and he held himself rigidly in hand and went from loneli-

ness to despair and from despair to clean desperation, for he was very much in love, though there was not one sign outside. Nor was there in Miss Dyer. Instead, she had a little new habit of looking far away and coming back with a start and a flush. It was a disquieting habit. Aside from this, when she came it was as the breath of June roses. Also, she hardly ever came. She would pour out her heart and soul, freed from all strain and restraint, and show such evident, girlish relief, that it was pure joy to watch her. She would produce awful love-letters and lightly read out opinions of Mr. Trevor that were unfit to print, and laugh over them until no sane man could accuse her of believing in them in the least. After promising in the cheeriest good faith to come the next night, she would leave him with one tingling hand-clasp and vanish down a nicely calculated lane; and the next night she would freely break that promise, and leave him in deep desolation to search a wind-swept street. Then, in some sort of self-defense, he would make a most formal call on some maidens of the old families, and under a glossy surface talk pleasing conventionalities to the border of hysterics. The next day, at a hospital bazaar, he would see Miss Dyer in a plum-colored suit, being fed on pink ice-cream by a man with a red mustache, or something equally irrelevant and painful.

This sort of business can go only so far, and one morning, after discussing a steamship service to a small island with three excited Frenchmen, Mr. Trevor came to the conclusion that he was ceasing to be a diplomat

or anything else. So he sat down and had a discussion with himself, and this was the substance of it:

"Now," he said, "you sit up and let us see what this blazing lunacy is all about and where it 's leading to. This girl, who owns the entire, unscared, male population of this county, comes along on her outside edge and bunts into your chest with her right shoulder. You pick her up, and she begins talking wild and unholy things about Claridge's and the principle of official secrecy, for which there is no explanation. Then she says, 'Come on for the sake of curiosity,' and you waltz in,— and waltz is surely the word,— with no more forethought than a driven rabbit, and undertake to alienate the conventional powers, which is always unwise, no matter how inane they may be. *But* you did n't give three yelps in Gehenna. So much for that. Then she treats you like a young and unintelligent dog for two days, for which there is no explanation. Then she comes with one night of glorious common sense — my God, but she is a dear! — at the end of which she heaves you into a snowbank, and you make up your mind that you 'll have to marry her, precisely as all the others have done. Then she leads you into the wilderness, where you dig up split wood in a clearing, for which there is no explanation, and hold a summer picnic in a midwinter night, and tells you everything that 's in her heart and soul, and that she only wanted to talk to you where she could see your face, and that the principle of official secrecy must be maintained, for which there is no explanation; and in the end she kissed

you — oh, my Lord, I wonder if I 'm crazy! — and there is surely no explanation for that. And she never, never can be seen before the face of mankind with you one time, though she can with any of the others many times, but she takes you to a shanty five miles in the woods, and talks a gorgeous, conventional talk to you through one great, blessed evening, and you drive home through a howling blizzard, and get utterly lost fourteen times, and she says she 's had the time of her life. *Then* she shifts the bally scene to full moon, and appears with a sheaf of wild love-letters, demonstratin' that every living man she knows wants to eat your head off, though they never explain it to you — and other amazing things beside. *Now* you can't come within shouting distance of her, and the whole business is getting a bit too complicated to be reasonable. I think she would n't have taken any of the others to that fishing-club, and I 'm sure she would n't have read any of the others those heartbreaking letters; so the question is, What 's the painful mystery all about? It 's going a little beyond me.

"There is a point," said Mr. Trevor in conclusion, "beyond which patience ceases to be an adequate policy. I am not Mohammed, and I do not pretend to understand, but I see one thing: that the time has now arrived for me to dissociate myself from these activities — which God forbid — or else to take certain steps." Mr. Trevor talked in this silly way because all his short life he had been training himself to hide his deepest feelings even from himself. But he felt deeply none

the less, and when a young Briton feels deeply, and decides to take steps, he is simple and direct.

Mr. Trevor wrote a note in which he said he wished to see Miss Dyer very specially that evening, and Miss Dyer, always prompt, wrote back to say she would be delighted — at the usual time and place. Mr. Trevor went very cheerfully, and Miss Dyer was not there; but Mr. Trevor's cheer continued unabated. He went in search of her. He went even up to the portals of her own house, which was forbidden, and smote thereon. Miss Dyer had gone by certain specified ways, and would ultimately wind up at a certain house where there was a dance. Mr. Trevor was profuse in his thanks and went cheerily home, where there was a sound of rending clothes and five white buttons lay in the hallway. He dressed in eight minutes. Then he went forth again into the April night and sought out the specified ways. He met Miss Dyer under a flaming arc with a nicely groomed man.

"This was my evening. You promised," he said.

"*I* promised!" said Miss Dyer, and gasped.

"Assuredly. Here 's your letter. Shall I read it?" Miss Dyer flushed, and made a heated sign, and the well-groomed man vanished.

"Don't make a fool of me!" she said.

"That is mutual," said Mr. Trevor.

"I 'm going to a dance at the Copps'."

"I also."

"What!" she said.

"Me, too," explained Mr. Trevor.

"You 'll do nothing of the sort."

"Oh, yes, I will — if you do. It is my evening."

"You don't know them."

"Thank God!" said Mr. Trevor, and he went. Would Miss Dyer introduce him to Mrs. Copp? She would not. "Then I 'll have to introduce myself," he said. He did, very nicely. "I 'm awfully sorry to have had to come," he explained, "but Miss Dyer broke an engagement," and he explained more fully. Miss Dyer blazed, but that made no difference. Mrs. Copp seemed a little stupefied, though she tried to be very nice about it. Then rose the difficulty about dances. He wanted them all, and he took them, too, softly elbowing potential partners out of the way until that party stared in paralyzed amazement and Miss Dyer went red and white with hopeless wrath. But to avoid scenes she danced, and Mr. Trevor was most charming. He danced well, too. But after their eighth together, the room was beginning to show signs of strain and Miss Dyer had had enough.

"I 'm going home," she said.

"All right," said Mr. Trevor; "anything."

"But you 're not coming with me," and she called one of the bondmen.

"Oh, yes, I am," he said.

The three went out together. That party is famous to this day.

"Exit! Depart!" said Mr. Trevor to the bondman. But the bondman would not, and they discussed it behind a hedge. Mr. Trevor had gone to Sandhurst,

which is unusual for a diplomat, and as a boxer he had been rated a high-class specialist. He had almost forgotten about it. Now he remembered. The bondman departed.

"You 're a brute," said Miss Dyer, "and I 'm not going home with you."

"Ally lighty," said Mr. Trevor in the manner of Huntley Wright of the late lamented San Toy, "I go home with you instead." She jerked aside from streets into lanes, and from lanes into byways, until the town thinned and ran out into upland fields — from the high crests of which fields she had one time read those love-letters in the moonlight.

"Leave me alone, can't you, you great stupid brute!" she flared.

"*That* would be criminal lunacy," said Mr. Trevor.

Then she gathered up her skirts and ran. And she could run, like a barren doe. The gravel pelted in her trail, and she went like a wind-swept ghost through the dark till she struck sod, squashy April sod, and Mr. Trevor, of the Foreign Office, ran after her, fully as fast as he could run, and could just a little more than keep up. She collapsed finally on the ground, a gray, crumpled mess in a fence-corner, and rolled half over as she fell. When Mr. Trevor arrived she was kneeling in the mud, sobbing as if her heart was utterly broken. He lifted her up bodily. For a minute neither of them could speak.

Then, "Oh, my darling," he said, "I love you with

all my heart and soul. I only wanted to tell you so to-night and to ask you to marry me because I could n't stand this business a minute longer." Here he went desperate and undertook to speak his mind. "I don't know much," he said, "but I know that if you keep up this folly you 'll go to the devil in the end — even you. You 're the most beautiful thing in the world. I don't know whether you want to marry me or not; but only to-day I thought perhaps you did, and I 'd better come and see." It was great bravery, in the face of this hurricane.

Miss Dyer breathed, "Oh, my God!" behind her hands, and brushed hair and mud and tears across her face together. "*You* love *me!*" she choked.

"Of course I do," he said.

"Then lend me a handkerchief or anything that 's dry to wipe this out of my eyes so I can see you. Why did n't you say so before, and stop all this outrageous scene? I 'm the most miserable, happiest fool in the world. If I had n't been a coward, I might have known, but I dare n't let myself go for a minute for fear I 'd lose you. I loved you — oh, dear!"— Here she threw both arms round him —"from the first almost as much as I do now, and I was helpless. You see, I knew how to keep the others, and all I could do was to try the same thing with you; and it almost broke my heart. It was the wildest, silliest business." She was laughing with a sort of half-sob mixed up with the laugh. This was the debonair Miss Dyer, mud-soaked, tear-stained, and altogether delicious, with her burning

cheek against Mr. Trevor's, pouring astounding facts into Mr. Trevor's ear, and Mr. Trevor was overcome.

"*You* love *me!*" was all he could chant, precisely as she had said it. And after awhile they convinced each other of the amazing truth.

"But," he said, after a storm-swept half-hour, "let 's both try to go back to imitation sanity long enough for me to find out who I am and where I am. I want to ask some questions."

"I 'll answer 'em all — every one."

"First, where did you come across that 'principle of official secrecy' you worked that night at the rink?" Miss Dyer laughed.

"Oh, that! That was nothing. Only my patient star again. You 'member you were here two whole weeks before we — collided. And you 'member you came out to Ottawa as somebody's secretary on some sort of commission or something four years ago — when I was in pinnys —"

"You devil!" said Mr. Trevor.

"Well, in those two weeks I went to a dance in a far-away city just to see a certain member of His Majesty's Parliament that I used to know. And he called you 'old Mott T.,' and told me if I ever met you to ask you about 'the principle of official secrecy'; an' of course I did n't. Is that silly enough for you!" She made a motion to show that this was all.

"You calculating devil!" said Mr. Trevor.

"Oh, no; I think I must have been rather in love with you then."

"But the running-away business, and generally breaking my heart, and lying about it in those beautiful letters the next day?"

"Don't be silly! You know as well as I do now. I loved you so much — my dear — I dare n't come. You 'd paralyzed my sword arm, and I only had my frightened wits to work with. I was deathly afraid I 'd give the whole business away. That night we had the picnic I got very brave,— could have carried through anything at all,— but you 'd laugh if you knew how near I came to breaking down or up or however it is you do break, once. I think it must have been that everlasting booming of those waves, or something."

"But the wood we dug up —"

Miss Dyer laughed like a child.

"That," she said, "you 'd never, never believe."

"There 's nothing I would n't believe now."

"All right. I marched one of the others, as you call them, out there on snow-shoes three days before with an ax,—'member the old snow-shoe tracks on the road? — and made him cut up that wood for you — and me — though I did n't tell him quite what it was for. I told him —" Miss Dyer tittered at the recollection. Mr. Trevor smote his thigh.

"And me burning with jealousy all the time! Who but a woman," he demanded of the stars, "would have thought of that? and what girl but you would have done it? You *are* a devil."

"Maybe," she laughed; "but I love you." There was another hiatus. "And I was so deadly sure you

were only playing that I tried to keep the whole thing — unofficial. There 's vanity for you! My! but you 're a good actor for any one half so stupid. I wonder — d' you suppose it can be that you 're not so stupid as you look?" Mr. Mott-Trevor could offer no opinion.

"Now," he said, "perhaps you can tell me why all your nice friends went raving insane and wrote it down in letters."

"I truly can't; but I think they must have s'picioned there was something wrong and been frightfully jealous. They did say some awful things, did n't they?"

"They did," said Mr. Trevor, smiling serenely.

"This was a nice dress, was n't it!" said Miss Dyer, on the way home.

"It was," said Mr. Trevor.

This story is almost finished, but not quite. If it were not a true story, I think this would be the proper place to finish it. The next scene may be in bad taste, but it is very satisfactory. Mr. Trevor still carried a trace of irritation over some of the things written in those letters. Young and irritated Britons to this day continue to be simple and direct. Mr. Trevor had been brooding, and he formed a suspicion or two. Also, the discussion with the bondman behind the hedge had called up certain memories that may have been unworthy. So, dress-suit and all, Mr. Trevor went up to a certain place of public assemblage and called out a certain man.

"Miss Dyer and I are to be married some day," he said by way of formally announcing his engagement.

"You come out here; I want to see you." The man went gray, not so much with fear as with embarrassment. They pranced softly about in a space between three buildings for a very few minutes, and had a chaotic vision of a largely invisible audience of small boys that danced on a loose board-pile. That man was not seen by his friends for several days. Then Mr. Trevor went and sought out one more man. When he finally went home he was a bloody spectacle, but there was great joy in his heart. As Mr. Trevor never told about these proceedings, and as nobody else cared to, I suppose nobody ever really knew, though I think there were a few who had suspicions.

A little while after this the city was shocked and grieved, and the more they learned about Mr. Trevor the more shocked and grieved they became. But this is really a forgiving world, so they began to forgive Miss Dyer almost immediately. They said she was a wonderfully bright girl, considering her chances. Besides, her sphere of influence was about to remove itself to a realm where she would be harmless, and leave them to slumber in peace. But Mr. Trevor they never forgave, and I don't think he knows it to this day.

In Bruton Street, W., quite close to Lord De Grey's, you will find Miss Dyer under another name. London, which is the only country I know more democratic than the valley of the Saskatchewan, accepted her at her true worth on the instant. This was no doubt because she was so much of a genius that she recognized that if you are truly nice at heart, and undertake to be

truly and openly yourself, you can go three times round the earth and make friends all the way.

Now go back and read the text, and see if you can trace the connection.

And if you are thinking of trying the great secret method, first, be sure that you are a genius, and, second, be certain that you can keep the barrier quite intact. Otherwise it will not work.

THE END

610

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